



WELCOME OPTIMISM

Bongbong Marcos calls for solidarity, optimism in New Year's message

MANILA, Philippines — On New Year's Eve, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. urged Filipinos here and all over the world to welcome 2024 with optimism and help contribute to the nation's future. Marcos said that new beginnings also allow reflections of the past. He said he hoped that it would allow the country to move forward with the lessons learned.

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Welcome the Calendar Girls of 2024

Heaven Peralejo, Julia Barretto, Nadine Lustre

It's that time of the year. Not Christmas. It's the time when Tanduy and Ginebra companies launch their calendars. Paraiso beer joined the marketing.

CALENDAR page 15

End of a love story by Kim Chiu

It took me awhile to say this..... until today.

We owe our supporters the truth, but we also respect each other's time of healing. In a relationship, love is always a significant factor, but



sometimes love is not enough.

We shared more than a decade of love, each other's support system, and many

beautiful memories. It was our mutual decision to transition our relationship into what we hope to be a lifelong friendship. We thank all our followers for their love and support, but now we ask you

KIM CHIU page 23



Despite West Phl Sea issue, PEZA continues to woo Chinese investors

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Andrea Brillantes, Belle Mariano enter TC Candler's 100 Most Beautiful Faces list



MANILA, Philippines — Young Kapamilya actresses Andrea Brillantes and Belle Mariano joined Janine Gutierrez, Liza Soberano, and Ivana Alawi on TC Candler's 100 Most Beautiful Faces of 2023.

Both actresses are new entrants while the other have figured on the long-running list several times before.

Robb Guinto admits getting indecent proposals from DOMs

Walang boyfriend sa ngayon ang Vivamax actress na si Robb Guinto.

Naligawan na ba siya ng dirty old man o DOM?

"Ay, opo! Naligawan na po ako," bulalas ni Robb. "Kasi po siyempre lumaki ako sa social media, e. So madami din talaga akong indecent proposals na natatanggap."

Ano o magkano ang pinakamalaking in-offer sa kanya? "Bahay at lupa," ang tumatawag rebelasyon ni Robb.

Hindi raw niya sineseryoso ang mga ganitong alok.

"Hindi naman po, hindi ko po sila sinasagot, at saka baka maging iba pa yung dating pag once na ni-reply-an ko, baka isipin pa na mukha akong pera," at muling natawa ang Vivamax actress.

Wala naman daw siyang tinarayan



sa mga ito.

"Wala naman po, pag ano na lang siguro, pag sobra na, iba-block ko po, para siyempre hindi na rin kami magka-ano ng conversation," paglinaw niya.

Pero aminin natin, tempting ang bahay at lupa. So, ano muna ang inisip ni Robb pagkatanggap ng naturang indecent proposal?

"Wala, kasi ang akin naman po kasi, makukuha ko din naman yun someday, basta mag... talagang magtiyaga at magpursige ako sa ginagawa ko," lahad niya.

Bakit nga ba hindi binago screen name niya? Ano ba totoong pangalan niya?

Saad niya, "Robilyn po, parang pinaiksi po." Bakit hindi na lang iyun ang ginamit niya? Lahad ni Robb, "Masyado pong maha-ba, e. Parang mas gusto ko din po, para parang misteryosa.

"Mas gusto ko po yun na pag once akala nila lalake, tapos makita nila babae pala." Totoong apelyido niya ang Guinto.

Tinanong namin si Robb kung sino ang idolo niyang aktres?

"Si Ms. Jaclyn Jose po."



Action Honda's Rafael Nebres & wife Sylvia support Bicol Canada



Action Honda Manager Rafael Nebres & wife Sylvia attend the Bicol Canada Christmas party.

Olivia Rodrigo's 'Can't Catch Me Now' makes Oscar's shortlist for best original song

The final nominations for the 96th Academy Awards are to be revealed on Jan. 23

It's a fact: Filipino-American singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo is ending the year with a bang by being included in the prestigious Oscar shortlist. The Oscars is on Mar. 10, 2024. Among the noteworthy mentions for Best Original Song was "Vampire" songstress' powerful contribution to the soundtrack of "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds &



Snakes" with "Can't Catch Me Now." The pop sensation and Grammy winner took to Instagram to express her gratitude and excitement about the recognition.

"So excited and thankful that 'Can't Catch Me Now' was included in the Oscar's shortlist for best original song!! and @_the_scl nominated it for outstanding original song for a dramatic or documentary visual media production!!!! So grateful and so honored to get to write music for such an amazing story," she wrote. The Best Original Song shortlist, comprising 15 remarkable entries, highlights the industry's diverse musical talents.

Happy New Year 2024

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Barbie Forteza on showbiz breakups in 2023: 'We respect their personal lives, privacy'

Barbie Forteza opted to not comment on the string of breakups in the entertainment industry in the past year, saying she respects their "personal lives and privacy."

The year 2023 witnessed several breakups in local showbiz including Kathryn Bernardo and Daniel Padilla, Kim Chiu and Xian Lim, and Andrea Brillantes and Ricci Rivero, just to name a few.

Barbie, who remains in a long-term relationship with Kapuso star Jak Roberto, told reporters that making a comment about the past breakups is not her story to tell, as she stressed that she and her boyfriend are not involved in their relationship.

"Ang mga ganyang bagay is not our place to talk about kasi it does not involve us. We're not friends with anyone na nai-issue. Kaya hindi kami para maki-comment," she said.



The actress, however, wished for "everyone's healing" towards the celebrities who previously split from their partners. She also pointed out that she and Roberto are busy with their respective pursuits to give the recent breakups the time of day.

"We will respect their personal lives, we will respect their privacy, and wish for everyone's healing," she said.

"Yung mga ganyang bagay, para sa'min, hindi na namin ma-entertain pa kasi hindi kami involved. As for us, busy kami sa sarili naming buhay.

Busy [si Jak] sa pag-hanapbuhay habang busy ako sa paglilipat. Hindi na namin para pag-usapan pa 'yun."

But when asked how she and Roberto maintain their longstanding relationship, Barbie said communication, trust, and love are important.

"Communication, of course. Trust is also important. Most of all, love," she said.



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Life's brighter under the sun



Carla Abellana debunks network transfer rumors

Carla Abellana shared a series of Instagram posts affirming that she will remain a Kapuso in 2024 amid rumors she is planning to transfer to other networks.

Abellana shared an Instagram reel of her upcoming series 'Widow's War' in which she wrote she will stay with the network and expressed her enthusiasm to work with Bea Alonzo, who recently transferred to GMA.

"The cats are now out of the bag. Yes, cats with an S. 1. I'm still a KAPUSO. 2. I'm finally going to be working with THE Bea Alonzo. Lord, THANK YOU," wrote the actress.

In another post, the 37-year-old actress greeted the new year by affirming that she will remain a Kapuso. "Happy New Year to me! I'm STILL a



KAPUSO!" she said.

Rumors of Abellana transferring to the other network surfaced when she was asked last September if she was open to joining any of ABS-CBN's projects, which the actress expressed excitement about.

"Kung bibigyan po ako ng opportunity why not. My goodness I would like to be part of Batang Quiapo pero wala naman pong offer, wala pong inaalok sa akin maging part ng Batang Quiapo," she said.

"Sa ngayon wala naman pong kahit na anong offer na maging parte ng kahit anong proyekto (ng ABS-CBN), pero kung alukin po ako, yayain po ako, magiging open po ako ro'n," added the actress.

Abellana currently stars in GMA's afternoon series "Stolen Life."

Pokwang wins deportation case vs ex Lee O'Brian

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) has favored comedienne Marietta Subong, better known as Pokwang, in her deportation case against her former partner Lee O'Brian.

The comedienne's legal counsel Atty. Rafael Vicente Calinisan Calinisan offered his gratitude to the BI and said O'Brian must be held accountable for his actions of illegally working in the country.

"Sa totoo lang, ang laban na ito ay laban ng Pilipino sa isang abusadong dayuhan sa ating sariling bayan," the lawyer said in a statement. "Pinaglaban din natin dito ang kapakanan ng lahat ng kababaihang umiyyak at naghahanap ng hustisya at respeto sa kanilang sarili. Para sa inyo ito."



Pokwang also expressed her thanks in a statement for the assistance given to her and Malia, her daughter with O'Brian, "Ngayon, lalo kong susubukan na maging mahusay na ina at ama sa aking anak. Lalo pa akong magsisikap sa araw-araw para maitaguyod ko ang aking pamilya."

The comedienne first filed the deportation case last June, claiming O'Brian kept renewing his tourist visa. She also filed complaints against O'Brian for financial abuse, intimidation and abandonment of their daughter.

O'Brian was with Pokwang for six years before they split in 2021. He previously filed a counter-affidavit against the deportation case.

Gretchen Barretto talks about life without social media; misses her bashers

Halos wala nang balita tungkol kay Gretchen Barretto dahil deactivated na ang kanyang Instagram account mula pa noong 2021.

Hindi rin siya madalas nakikita ng publiko maliban lamang kung may mga post ang ilan niyang kaibigan kapag nagkita sila o nagkasama.

Last December 21, 2023, dalawang short video clips ang ibinahagi ng beauty doctor na si Dr. Aivee Teo ng The Aivee Clinic.

Sa isang bahagi ay sinabihan siya ni Dr. Aivee, "Everyone's missing you."

Maiksing tugon ni Gretchen, "I know!"

Dagdag pa ni Dr. Aivee, "They're all asking about you. You have to say hello to everyone who misses you."

Sambit ni Gretchen, "Hello to all my bashers. I miss you, too."

"And if I were you, I'd miss me too."

Sa isang video, nasa isang room sila habang sumasailalim si Gretchen sa

procedure na kung tawagin ay Aivee Thermage.

Habang nagkukuwentuhan, nabanggit muli ng doktora kung paano na-miss ng marami si Gretchen.

At ramdam naman daw ito ni Gretchen.

Aniya, "I feel the love."

Dagdag pa ni Gretchen, madalas siyang mag-ehersisyo

kaya maayos ang takbo ng kanyang heartbeat sa edad na 53.

Tanong ni Dr. Aivee, "Is life better without social media?"

"I believe so," tugon ni Gretchen.

Tanong muli ni Dr. Aivee, "What's your words of wisdom?"

Dito na nagbigay ng kanyang tootong nararamdaman si Gretchen.

Ramdam daw niya ang sinseridad ng



mga taong nakapalibot sa kanya.

"I feel people more because I also feel their sincerity.

"When you give me something, it's because you know it's what I want.

"It's not the value that you're giving me.

"Because, you know, 'Oh, she's gonna post it and everyone's gonna see it.'"

"And even when I dress now, I dress

for myself and not for the public. It's more real.

"And I didn't know that then, now I know it.

"I have the freedom to be safe to go wherever I want, and people don't need to know where I am, what I'm doing.

"People can just guess."

Andrea Brillantes on her wishes in 2024: 'Basta growth lang, healing.'

Ibinahagi ni Andrea Brillantes kung ano ang nilu-look forward niya sa darating na 2024.

Ang taong 2024 ay Year of the Dragon. Sabi pa ng controversial actress, "Di na kasi ako masyadong nag-i-expect, basta growth lang, healing."

Ang Christmas wish naman daw niya ay sana matuto na siyang mag-drive. Dagdag niya, "Christmas wish ko? Masaya naman na po kasi ako, healthy yung buong family ko.

"And maayos naman kami. Siguro, Christmas wish ko na lang ano, matuto na mag-drive." December 18, si Andrea mismo ang lumapit kay Kathryn Bernardo upang ipaalam dito na nagkaroon sila ng ugnayan ni Daniel Padilla. Iba't ibang trusted sources ang nagbigay ng kanilang nalalaman ukol sa isyu. Nitong nakaraang December 7, 2023, tumanggap magkomento ang young actress sa isyu. Abala raw siya sa proyektong Senior High kaya tuloy lamang ang buhay para sa kanya. Saad ni Andrea, "Di pa puwedeng mag-stop. Ang dami pa akong kailangan gawin in life. Madami pa akong kailangan bayaran." Kaliwa'l kanan ang batikos ng netizens kay Andrea, na itinuturong third party umano sa KathNiel breakup pero deadma na siya rito. Ipinagtanggol naman si Andrea ng inang si Belle Brillantes mula sa bashers.

Kinumpirma nina Kathryn at Daniel ang kanilang hiwalayan nitong nakaraang November 30.



♥ **Yes Yes, its breakup season** 😊🙄

Kim Chiu and Xian LIM to Break? Yes

Last month in this column, the heading was the only the question "Breakup Season ba?" The first topic was "Kim Chiu and Xian Lim to break?" Now, hindi na question. Period na. And we also put an answer na "yes". They did break up. At the height of the Kathniel breakup brouhaha, KimXi said they will make an announcement soon. They did not say what it was. Siyempre, na curious ang tao. Since the hot topic at that time was the Kathniel split, people might have thought that KimXi was going to announce something different, like, a wedding. After all, kung breakup din, ho-hum, nothing to get excited na, di ba? Well, they confirmed that they break up na rin. I think their break up was kasabay ng rumors ng Kathniel split. Pero nag-confirm iyong dalawa at sumabog, hinintay nila lumamig muna ng kaunti ang balita ng Kathniel split.

EduChe loveteam break-up

Who? Edu Manzano and Cherie Pie Picache po. Yes, in case you never heard it, they were together po. Breakup na rin po sila.

Breakup Season Po

According to Psychology Today, people take this time to end

things because the idea of spending another holiday season unhappy is unbearable. According to social media status updates, the first seasonal breakup peak, coined the "Spring Clean," goes down in March. But the biggest love purge falls about two weeks before the winter holidays.

Paano kaming mga single? Nahuhuli kami sa trending. Kanino kami makikipag-break? Hay buhay.

Gerald and Julia is next breakup

My fearless prediction po is Gerald Anderson and Julian Barretto will break up next. I give it until March 2024. Matagal na pong walang ingay sa kanila. Ni hindi na nga pinaghirapan ng mga managers nila at ng media na bigyan sila ng loveteam name. Alam kasi nila na hindi magtatagal.

Sharon and Kiko will not split

Huwag niyo po hulaan si Sharon Cuneta and Kiko Pangilinan ang maghihiwalay. Hindi po maghihiwalay iyan. Well, at least, not until March 2024.

Marian Rivera cry in birthday



makes Ivana Alawi prank video

Kapuso actress Marian Rivera had content creator-actress Ivana Alawi literally in tears, pulling off a birthday prank initiated by Ivana's younger sister Mona.

Ivana posted the video on her YouTube channel which began with a mukbang portion at Marian's home, with Mona feeding the questions to the two actresses.

The conversation was going well until Marian called out Ivana for being late, expanding on it in a dramatic tirade even after Ivana praised Marian as a person she looked up to for years.

At one point, Marian "complained" that only crabs were prepared, making Ivana ask for some rice. Marian later walked away and asked the video not be published, leaving an initially apologetic Ivana silent and holding back tears.

The vlog then "rewinds" to Mona and Marian planning the former to prank Ivana through in-

timidation and giving her attitude to the point of tears, which Mona defends was her and Ivana's love language — making each other

cry.

As the video cuts back to a tearful Ivana, Marian rushed back to embrace the content creator-actress and admit to her it was all just a prank, which made Ivana cry all the more.

"Gusto ko tuloy sa swimming pool magtago. Shet, hindi naman kasi nagp-prank si Marian Rivera!" Ivana exclaimed as she wiped her tears away.

To make up for it, Marian brought out a cake as Ivana turned 27 years old last December 25, Christmas Day. Marian's husband Dingdong Dantes and their children Zia and Sixto also appeared to greet Ivana.

Ivana's "birthday wish" was never to be pranked by Marian, and vowed she and Mona would not prank again.

Alex Gonzaga reveals she got a nose job

It took Alex Gonzaga years of thinking about a nose job before she finally got it done.

The actress-host posted photos on Instagram on Friday, December 15, 2023, flaunting her newly enhanced nose.

She wrote: "I say do what makes you happy! After so many years of contemplating, last month I finally decided to do it. Wala ng nakapigil. Now you nose!"

In another post, Alex captioned her post with the words: "Magpaganda ka habang wala sa bahay asawa mo... pagbalik nya tapos nagtaka sa saka mo sabihin 'ako lang to' [LOL emoji]"



The photos in her second post showed a full body shot of Alex wearing an all-black get-up and with her thinner, more pointed nose.

NETIZENS REACT

Celebrity friends of Alex praised her new look, with Pauleen Luna commenting, "Ganda mo."

Content creator Zeinab Harake remarked, "Ganda ganda mo lalo." Others, meanwhile, were not sure whether to take the revelation seriously or not owing to Alex's reputation as a jokester.

"Minsan nag doubt ako sa post nya [LOL emoji] baka is a prank lagi [LOL emoji]," commented a follower.

However, some disliked Alex's new look, saying they really preferred her facial features pre-nose procedure.



Iyah Mina stresses need for LGBTQ actors in queer roles



Since her triumphant acting debut in the 2018 Cinema One Originals film "Mamu: And a Mother Too," Iyah Mina would go on to land various acting projects, including three Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) movies.

And she couldn't be more thankful for all the opportunities, because, as it is, the range and quantity of roles of LGBTQ actors in local show biz remain quite limited. And even then, some of them still end up being overlooked in favor of straight actors.

"I'm really grateful. I would like to believe that my win was eye-opening for filmmakers ... that if there are trans or LGBTQ roles or stories, then cast trans or LGBTQ actors," Iyah, the first transgender woman to win a best actress award in the Philippines, told the Inquirer at a press conference for the 2023 MMFF entry "Broken Hearts Trip."

But things are starting to change little by little, she observed. Actress-television host KaladKaren's best supporting actress win at the 1st Summer MMFF, for instance, further amplified calls to continue giving opportunities to queer actors especially for queer-themed stories.

"This isn't a knock against straight actors. But if it's our stories, then I hope they can let us tell them," stressed Iyah, whose 2023 filmography includes "Third World Romance" and "Here Comes the Groom."

While a talented actress herself, Iyah couldn't help but feel intimidated at the thought of working with Jaclyn Jose in "Broken Hearts Trip." But later on, she discovered that the Cannes best actress winner is one of the kindest, most generous artists in the country.

"I was shy at first. But you have to reciprocate what she gives. Thankfully, hindi siya madamot. She's so generous about everything, so you're able to give what the director needs. Merely being able to cry in front of her already makes me happy!" she related. "And then you see her happy for you, applauding you, congratulating you and telling you you're good."

Love and relationships

And since the movie centers on heart-break, travel and healing, the conversation inevitably veered toward the people she loved and lost, and how she got over them. Memories of her former live-in partner of four years never fail to bring out bittersweet feelings.

"He really made me feel like a woman. I had yet to transition back then. We had a happy relationship. But in those four years, we were rarely sexually intimate. When you're taking hormones, you don't really have the sex drive, no urges," she related. "One night, he said his goodbye. The morning after, he was gone."

"One year later, an alarm on my phone went off. It was a note he had written. There, he told me he really loved me, explained why he did what he did. And it was hard. I had already moved on. But the note brought everything back. So what I did was, I revisited all the places we used to visit together. We used to do the laundry together, so I spent the day washing clothes," she added.

Now, she has a more pragmatic attitude toward love and relationships. "It's always better if you choose to love yourself first," Iyah said, adding that she's done giving second chances. "Once is enough."

Alden Richards open to working again with Kathryn Bernardo; wishes Maine Mendoza well

Nang dahil sa pagtatambal nina Alden Richards at Kathryn Bernardo sa Hello, Love, Goodbye, hindi sinasadyang nadawit ang pangalan ni Alden nang pag-usapan ang hiwalayang Kathryn Bernardo at Daniel Padilla.

Ang dahilan, mula sa Kath-Niel ay may fans na nagsi-shift ngayon sa Kath-Den.

Hawak pa rin ng Hello Love Goodbye (2019) ang record bilang highest grossing Filipino film of all time.

Kaya may clamor pa rin na gawan ang pelikula ng part two para magkasamang muli ang tinalalang Alden at Kathryn.

Positibo ang tugon ni Alden sa ganitong posibilidad.

"Ako po, of course, Hello, Love, Goodbye naman po made history.

"At yun naman din po ang clamor ng mga nakapanood—to have a part two.

"Ako po, ready naman ako, anytime," saad ni Alden.

Alam daw ng box-office director na si Cathy Garcia-Sampana, ang naghulma ng Hello, Love, Goodbye, na bukas si Alden na magkatrabaho muli sila.

Sabi pa ni Alden, "Yun nga po ang sinabi ko kay Direk Cathy nang makausap

ako. "Sabi ko, 'Direk, kapag nag-decide kayo ng part two, ika-cancel ko munang lahat ng schedule.

"But then again, that's really up to Star Cinema, kasi sila po ang producer."



Sa ngayon, mapapanood muna si Alden kasama si Sharon Cuneta sa kanilang 2023 Metro Manila Film Fest entry, ang A Family of Two ng

ALDEN ON MAINE AND ARJO

Naitanong din kay Alden kung sila naging phenomenal ka-love team niyang si Maine Mendoza ay may posibilidad pang magkasama.

"But right now, with how I see it, medyo okay na po ngayon si Maine na mag-settle sa family life niya. And we respect that. I respect that as well."

Binati raw ni Alden si Maine nang ikasal ito kay Arjo Atayde noong July 2023.

Nagkataon lang daw na may schedule siya noon at hindi siya nakapunta.

Dagdag ni Alden, "At yon din po yata yung time na nagkaroon ng landslide sa Baguio. Pero, I wish her well and congratulations sa kanila ni Arjo."

Sanib Saya Toronto Brings Christmas Holiday Cheers

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Bringing the Christmas spirit and cheers to members of the Filipino-Canadian community is one purposeful and extraordinary engagement that generous community leaders in the Greater Toronto Area graciously extend and usher in the traditional holiday season. Yes, "mga kababayan". The ever-active Sanib Saya Toronto conducted its "6th Sanib Saya Christmas Party" on Sunday, December 3, 2023.

The holiday event was successfully carried out at the Mt. Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church Hall at 140 St. Regis Crescent South, North York, Toronto, Ontario. In celebratory attendance were more than 300 guests including children, seniors, and performers.

Sanib Saya Toronto, a community-based & volunteer-run initiative, was founded and organized by Corrie Coutts of Filipino Achievers Canada (FAC), Nitz Rejdik of Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT), and Judith Gonzales of Filcore Support Group. Other members of the Sanib Saya Toronto circle are Steve Pagao of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce-Toronto(PCCT), and Jackie Cristini of the Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan (FCAV). Other participating organizations include the Mt. Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Congregation, Silayan Community



Centre, Kalayaan Cultural Community Centre, IPEN, Davaoenos, and the Josie De Leon Performing Arts.

Distributed to deserving recipients and attendees were 100 bags of rice, 100 windbreaker jackets & SPA gift sets, and 50 bags of unisex hygiene products and goodies, all courtesy of main organizers Corrie Coutts, Nitz Redjik, and Judith Gonzalez, respectively. Other generous donors were Steve Pagao who donated food, household items such as a flat iron, a food chopper, and cash for the JDL kids. Ms. Agnes P. Miranda, a notable community leader, philanthropist, and the current President of the Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), was the special guest of honor. Fondly called "Tita Agnes", she gave away 50 bags of winter accessories and cash given to the children, the JDL kids & performers, and the DJ service fee as well.

Ably hosted by Judith Gonzales and Judy Montenegro, the 5-hour live program consisted of 2 segments. The first part involved songs, music,

prayers, welcome remarks presentation of certificates, devotional, and benediction, respectively by Alona Alba, Gladys Hongo, Judy Gamez, Courrie Coutts, VOZ, Lani Aguinaldo, Ven Miguel, Pastors Ardison Bernardo and Hansel Joseph Geviesco. After lunch, Part 2 includes a welcome speech by Courrie Coutts, acknowledgment of organizations by Lani Aguinaldo, presentation of empowerment by Steve Pagao, and followed by gift giving for deserving beneficiaries.

Wonderful performances were demonstrated by star students and volunteers of the Josie De Leon Performing Arts(JDLPA), with the sound and music provided by Ryan Orlanda of Ryan Events Specialists. Moreover, Christmas and holiday songs, dance exhibitions, and fervent messages of hope and inspiration were aptly delivered by Agnes Miranda, Steve Pagao, Christine Santos, Pastor Ardison Bernardo, and Kimberly Domingo-Tolibas, a cancer survivor. Among the community leaders

SANIB page 10

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian and girlfriend Bianca Manalo reunite in Canada

Reunited, and it feels so good.

That was how Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian felt when he reunited with



his girlfriend, former beauty queen-turned-actress Bianca Manalo in Vancouver, Canada.

On social media, the celebrity couple in winter clothes shared sweet

photos of their reunion abroad.

"Reunited, and it feels so good," wrote the senator in the caption on Dec. 29. The line was lifted from a popular pop song "Reunited" by Peaches and Herb, a No. 1 song from 1978.

Bianca and her family were on a holiday vacation in Japan when the controversy erupted. Bianca was tagged in a controversy with hunk actor Rob Gomez, whose alleged private conversations with her and another actress, Herlene Budol, leaked.

Bianca and Herlene denied they were engaged in malicious conversations with Rob. The stars of "Magandang Dilag" slammed the black propaganda against them.

Sen. Sherwin earlier said no fake news can divide him and Bianca.



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Philippines, EU evaluate FTA prospects

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine and the European Union (EU) will now make their respective evaluations on how to move forward on a possible resumption of a free trade agreement (FTA) as stocktaking exercises have just concluded, according to an official of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

“For the EU (FTA), we just finished [the] stocktaking exercise. It was not a scoping discussion,” said Trade Undersecretary Allan Gepty.

“We will just make our respective assessments/evaluations and see how we can move forward on a possible resumption of PH-EU FTA negotiations,” he added when asked what will be the next step after the stocktaking exercise.

Last month, EU Delegation to

the Philippines head of trade Philipp Dupuis told reporters that the purpose of the stocktaking exercise is to see what both countries can expect from each other.

“And to see whether we have any red lines on both sides that can be reconciled,” he said.

“So, we will have some kind of wrap up with the DTI and European Commission and based on that, we will decide whether there is a chance of having a successful FTA negotiation in a reasonable amount of time,” Gepty added.

While the overall goal of the FTA has not really changed since the previous negotiations, Dupuis emphasized that a lot of new factors evolved that may be needed to take into consideration such as digitalization and

e-commerce.

“Overall, the general goals haven’t changed. And that’s why we look into this process with a very positive spirit because we know each other already,” he said.

Based on the DTI’s website, the launch of Philippines-EU FTA negotiation was announced in December 2015. The first round of negotiations was held on May 23 to 27 in Brussels, Belgium, while the second round of negotiations was held on Feb. 13 to 17 in Cebu, Philippines.

Trade Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo said earlier that having scoping discussions would be timely as the

previous scoping studies were held way back in 2015.

“So many things have happened since the last negotiating rounds and also the last scoping,” Rodolfo said earlier.

He cited the electric vehicles, critical minerals, as well as renewable energy as some of the important topics today that have not been talked about in the previous scoping.

The Philippines and the EU announced their intention to relaunch negotiations for the FTA in July during the visit of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the country.

Alessandra de Rossi on Firefly acting: “Award-winning... charot!”

“Proud ako sa ‘yo, kasi mainstream na tayo... charot,” ang umpisang bulalas ni Alessandra de Rossi sa direktor na si Zig Dulay na kasama ni Alessandra sa mediacon ng Firefly nitong Martes, December 19 sa Wildflour Café + Bakery sa Quezon City.

Entry sa idinadaos na ngayong 49th Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) ang Firefly na pinagbibidahan ni Alex (palayaw ni Alessandra) at ng batang aktor na si Euwann Mikael.

“I mean proud ako na nakagawa ng isang napakagandang kuwento na mag-iwan talaga ng maraming marka, maraming tanong.

“Ang description ko nga is the greatest love of all ang pagmamahal ng isang ina at ang pagmamahal ng isang anak sa kanyang ina.



“Maganda yung istorya namin, script pa lang maganda na siya sa totoo lang, ‘tapos nung na-shoot ganun pa rin, ‘tapos nung napanood ko, maganda pa rin.

“So I guess, kami na ‘to, charot!” bulalas ni Alessandra at pabirong patungkol sa pinakamamimithing parangal sa MMFF—ang Best Picture award.

Makakalaban ng Firefly para sa parangal na ito ang siyam na iba pang kasali sa festival—Rewind, When I Met You In Tokyo, Family of Two (A Mother and Son Story), Penduko, Mallari, Gomburza, Kampon, Becky & Badette, at Broken Hearts Trip.

DID NOT PREPARE FOR THE ROLE

Tinanong si Alessandra kung paano siya naghanda para sa role niya sa Firefly na si Elay.

“Hindi ako ma-prepare na tao, na pag nasa set, pag nasa shoot iyon na yun, kasi gusto mo yung naturally ma-process mo sana yung character mo, di ba?”

Natatawag rebelasyon pa ni Alex, “Yung pinakamabigat na eksena, nilagay nila sa day 1, di ba, Zig Dulay?” muling pagbanggit ni Alex sa kanilang direktor.

“Sabi ko, ‘First day talaga ito!’

“Hindi ko pa napo-process yung pagiging nanay ni Euwann or yung buong character ko, sabi niya, ‘Kaya mo yan!’

“May ano pa, e... May backdrop na sunset, so kailangan timing-an mo siya, ganun. So wala na akong kailangang i-prepare,” natawawang pakli pa ng aktres.

Mula sa GMA Pictures at GMA Public Affairs at sa panulat ni Angeli Atienza, nasa cast din ng Firefly sina Cherry Pie Picache, Yayo Aguila, Max Collins, Kokoy de Santos, Epy Quizon, ang tandem nina Ysabel Ortega at Miguel Tanfelix, at si Dingdong Dantes.

Ano ang dahilan sa pagtanggap ni Alex ng Firefly?

“Maganda yung kuwento,” lahad ng aktres, “Tsaka ano talaga siya, kuwentong nanay.

“So kapag nakakabasa ka ng ganitong script na alam mong bihira lang, kasi siyempre sanay tayo kung hindi romance, comedy... Itong ganitong klaseng genre medyo kaunti na lang yung gumagawa.

“Hindi ko na maalala yung last.

“So parang pag nakakabasa ka ng script na ganito, gusto mong sumali sa project kahit ano yung role mo, di ba?”

“So thankfully, yung pinakamagandang role, nasa akin. Pasensiya ka na,” sabay tumatawag baling ni Alex sa katabi niyang si Euwann.

TYPE OF ACTING

“Award-winning... charot,” ang pabiro namang sagot ni Alex sa tanong kung anong klaseng acting ang ipinakita niya sa Firefly bilang si Elay kumpara sa ibang papel na nagawa na niya.

“Hindi, iba kasi, sa farm siya nagtatrabaho, labandera. So ito naman sa akin storyteller, magaling mag-drawing, so iba rin siyang klaseng self-esteem, ‘ika nga. Parang mas mabulaklak din siya dahil mas

Sugar Mercado wants TV comeback for Willie Revillame’s show

Walong taon nang hiwalay si Sugar Mercado sa mister na si Kristofer Jay Go.

Naayos na rin ang masalimuot na legal battle nila noong 2019.

Matatandaang nagsampa ng reklamo ang dating SexBomb dancer kay Kristofer noong 2015 dahil sa paglabag sa R.A. 9262 o Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act simula 2010.

Kinumpirma ni Sugar na annulled na rin ang kasal nila, at naka-move on na kanyang ex-husband na ang bagong karelasyon ay isa ring Chinese.

Sa kaso ni Sugar, marami raw nanliligaw sa kanya, pero wala raw sa isip niya ang pumasok sa isang relationship.

Choice niya munang maging single.

“Hindi ko kayang pagsabayin ang love and work. Pag na-in love kasi ako super tutok ako. Hindi ko maasikaso ang busines ko,” sabi ni Sugar.

SUGAR MERCADO ON WILLIE REVILLAME

Nakilala nang husto si Sugar bilang isa sa SexBomb Dancers.

Naging isa rin siyang co-hosts sa programa ni Willie Revillame na Wowowin.

Nami-miss ba niyang makatrabaho ang dati ay na-link sa kanya na si Willie Revillame?

“Siyempre, oo,” ngiti ni Sugar.

“Ang laki ng naitulong niyan sa akin.

Isa iyan sa aking pinasaaalamatan. Isa si Kuya Will sa mga tumulong sa akin nung nangangailangan talaga ako.

“Kaya sana, please, matuloy na ang programa niya dahil ang dami niyang natutulungan na mga tao.

“Hindi lang ako, si Donita and Tekla, si Hipon, si Boobies [Wonderland]. Saksi po ako sa mga natulungan niya.”

Incidentally, ongoing ulit ang game show ni Willie na ipinapalabas sa Facebook at YouTube.

Matapos kasing nag-terminate ng kon-

trata ang host sa Advanced Media Broadcasting System (AMBS) noong April 2023, nagkaroon siya ng exploratory talks sa PTV4 at IBC13.

Pero may balil-balitang babalik na sa free TV ang Wowowin sa mismong birthday ni Willie sa January 27, 2024.

“Good for him,” matipid na sagot ni Sugar.

Ano ang mensahe niya para kay Willie?

“Ano, good health, long life, and tuluy-tuloy yung pagtulong niya sa kapwa. Yun naman ang ano niya, kaya mahal namin siya.

“Sarili niyang pera, kahit nung pandemya, ang ginagamit niya sa pagtulong sa mga tao.

“Kaya saludo takaga ako sa yo, Kuya Will. We miss you and we love you, Kuya Will,” pagtatapos ni Sugar.



Francine Diaz: “Wala akong inahas, wala akong nilandi.”

“Wala akong inagaw.”

Iyan ang mariin na mensahe ni Francine Diaz patungkol sa hindi matapus-tapos na intriga sa pagitan niya at fellow Kapamilya stars na sina Andrea Brillantes at Seth Fedelin.

Naglabas ng saloobin ang batang aktres

sa pamamagitan ng Facebook Live.

Si Francine ay ang pinaghihinalaang third party ng ilang fans kung bakit nagkahiwalay ang magkasintahang Andrea at Seth.

Matatandaang sinabi ni Andrea nung April 11, 2022, sa Facebook Live na

dalawang taon sila naging mag-on ni Seth at “mutual decision” ang kanilang breakup.

Iginiit ni Francine na

wala siyang kinalaman sa kung anuman ang namagitan at kinahinatnan ng relasyon ng dalawa.

Si Francine at Seth ay kasalukuyang love team partners.

“Wala akong inahas, wala akong nilandi, wala akong inagaw. Malinaw?

‘Screen record n’yo, puwede n’yong balikan. Playback n’yo. Kasi wala talaga akong inagaw,” malumanay ngunit palabanan na hirit ni Francine.

Sinabi rin ni Francine na professional ang relationship nila ni Seth at “ginagawa lang namin ang trabaho namin.”



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Alden Richards not skipping Eat Bulaga! guesting; reveals 2024 film with Coco Martin



Alden Richards values loyalty and “utang na loob.”

“Diyan po tayo sa GMA until the last day. And Sparkle.”

Also, his close ties to Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto, and Joey de Leon, a.k.a. TVJ—now the main hosts of TV5’s noontime show E.A.T.—might have been the reason why he dilly-dallied about promoting his Metro Manila Film Festival entry A Family Of Two on Eat Bulaga!

But Alden can bend a little. “Yun nga po yung sinabi ko before, bago pa lang nangyari sa Eat Bulaga! na paglipat sa TV5.

“If I have to do promos with all the shows, siyempre, I will not deprive the project that I’m working with, with the opportunity to promote it to different shows po,

especially mga noon-time shows natin.”

TVJ did not make any case against Alden’s appearance on Eat Bulaga!

Tito Sotto told reporter Gorgy Rula, veteran showbiz reporter: “Contract star ng GMA si Alden, alangan namang hindi siya mag-promote dun? No problem with that at all.”

With the Eat Bulaga! guesting up in the air, Alden reaffirmed his loyalty to the show’s original Dabarkads: “ang laki ng natulong po sa akin talaga.”

His erstwhile love team with Maine Mendoza, AlDub, in the original Eat Bulaga, became phenomenal and was a defining moment in his career.

He says: “...My relationship with the Dabarkads po ng Eat Bulaga!, Tito Vic and Joey, still there. And the respect is still there po,

di po nawawala iyan.

“I always mean well po sa mga ginagawa ko naman sa buhay po. Ah, hindi po ako para mang-apak o mang-tarnish ng relationship po na nagkaroon po ako sa mga nakatrabaho ko before.”

In June 2023, at the height of the intense noon-time show battle, there was tittle-tattle about Alden joining the revamped Eat Bulaga!

Alden denied: “Wala po. Wala pong ganoong offer.”

“Kung sakaling may mag-push, is it possible na tanggapin mo? O dahil sa respeto sa TVJ, mag-decline ka na lang?”

Alden’s final answer: “Opo. Hindi ko po siya tatanggapin.”

Come 2024, he and Coco Martin are cooking up a film collaboration.

“Yes po, baka po next year, MMFF,” Alden confirmed.

POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES ALUMNI CELEBRATE HOLIDAY RITES By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Faithful to their Filipino Christian tradition, the members and officers of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Alumni Foundation of Canada (PUPAFC), held their “Christmas Party and Induction Ceremony” on December 16, 2023, at the MFFC Community Centre in Markham, Ontario. PUPAFC is a non-profit, volunteer-run organization composed of alumni, former students, and faculty members of the erstwhile Philippine College of Commerce (PCC), now known as the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in Manila, Philippines.



The 2023-2025 PUPAFC Board of Directors and Officers.

Directors inducted are William “Willie” Reodica- President, Reynaldo H. Villanueva- Vice President (Internal), Haggy Q. Caluya-Vice President (External), Lea D. Ramsay-Secretary, Luisa G. Andra-Treasurer, Agnes C. Soriano-Auditor, Roy V. Devierte- Business Manager, Antonietta D. Muriel-PRO, Alber-

to Rodil, Virginia Santos, and Bernie S. Gonzales- Directors. The new Executive Directorate was sworn into office by Tony A. San Juan, Founding Chairman of the Filipino Heritage Council of Canada (FHCC).

In his inaugural address, PUPAFC head honcho Willie Reodica thanked the directors and officers for “their enviable support, cooperation, and hard work as well as for keeping their minds and hearts in faithfully pursuing the established mission and vision of PUPAFC including its desirable programs and projects.” The induction officer, Tony San Juan warmly congratulated the new set of directors & officers and encouraged them to



PUPAFC President Willie Reodica with Inducting Officer Tony A. San Juan

continue meeting purposefully the challenges as leaders and to expand their engagements with fellow alumni both in Canada and in the Philippines” as well.

The 5-hour-lively-program was ably-hosted by Haggy Caluya and Irene Mejia. The opening prayer was led by Antonietta Muriel followed by a welcome address from Rey Villanueva and Alberto Rodil gave his special message. A beautiful vocal solo was performed by JHERFLOW. Special Dance numbers were delightfully demonstrated by I & I Powerdance. Likewise, this group led

the non-stop line dancing and joyfully participated with almost all-lady performers. Lots of gifts and door prizes were also raffled and presented to all the lucky winners. Dr. Alberto Rodil and Willie Reodica chaired and co-chaired respectively the Event Steering Committee. They were solidly assisted by the various chairpersons, co-chairpersons, and members of the 6 committees on finance, tickets & reception, souvenir program & invitation, awards & raffle, hospitality & entertainment, and decoration.

All the more than 100 guests, family, and friends aptly considered the holiday event to be a successful and memorable milestone of sharing, giving, dancing, dining, camaraderie, fellowship, “kodakans”, and greetings within the true spirit of Filipino-focused Paskuhan, Pasasalamat. at Pagsasamahan. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Ysabel Ortega, Miguel Tanfelix not interested in becoming business partners

Sabay naming nakapanayam sina Miguel Tanfelix at Ysabel Ortega para sa entry nila sa 49th Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) ang Firefly.

Ano ang masasabi nina Miguel at Ysabel tungkol dito?

Lahad ni Ysabel, “Of course we’re hoping na as the days go by mas dumami ang sinehan kasi naniniwala po talaga kami sa pelikula.

“And siyempre gusto namin ng chance na maipakita sa mga tao kung gaano kaganda itong film na ito. So hopefully talaga, hopefully once mapanood nila.

“Hopefully yung mga reviews that are coming out will be enough para madagdagan pa yung mga sinehan namin.

“We’re hoping for the best.”

“Ako personally malungkot,” ang diretsahang pag-amin naman ni Miguel. “Dahil pag maganda yung output ng ginawa

niyo, siyempre inaasahan mo, gusto mo mapanood ng maraming tao.

“Na matuto sila sa film, ma-appreciate nila yung film.

“Kaso iyon nga, pag konti yung sinehan, mas less yung opportunity nilang mapanood yung film namin kaya...

“Hindi ko naman alam yung proseso diyan so ang magagawa ko na lang is malungkot,” natawa na lang pagkatapos si Miguel.

Umaasa rin si Miguel, katulad ni Ysabel, na sa pagdaan ng mga araw ay mas dumami pa ang mga sinehang pagpapalabasan ng Firefly.

Naniniwala siya sa epekto ng word of mouth na magpapakalat kung gaano kaganda ang pelikula nila.

“Iyon na nga, e. So kailangan word of mouth na ibalita nila sa mga kapitbahay nila, Kapamilya nila, Kapuso nila, na maganda yung film namin dahil kami, naniniwala kami sa film.”

Tinanong namin ang dalawa ng kung pang-acting award ba ang ipinakita nila sa Firefly?

“Yung movie talaga na ito is really yung istorya nung mag-nanay. So naniniwala kami na yung performance nila is pang-award winning talaga. So we’re rooting for them,” pahayag pa ni Ysabel na ang tinutukoy ay ang mga bidang sina Alessandra de Rossi at Euwenn Mikaell.

Dagdag namang sabi ni Miguel, “Ibigay na po natin sa film, kay Direk [Zig Dulay], kay Ate Alex, kay Euwenn.

“Kami, kung bibigyan niyo po, bakit hindi,” at muling tumawa si Miguel.

Pangalawang filmfest na ito ni Miguel. Ang una ay ang Mulawin: The Movie noong 2005 kung saan gumana siya bilang batang Pagaspas.

Unang filmfest entry at unang pelikula naman ni Ysabel ang Firefly.

“Nakakatuwa and very honored ako na part ako ng film na ito and first film ko pa. So nagpapasalamat po ako sa tiwala and sa guidance ni Direk Zig.”

YSABEL’S BUSINESSES
Sa murang edad ni Ysabel ay may mga negosyo na siya.

May branch o franchise siya ng sikat na chain of nail spa and salon, ang Nailandia (na pag-aari ng mag-asawang Noreen and Juncynth Divina) at recently naman ay nagtayo sila ng ina niyang si Michelle Ortega ng bakery, ang Maria Ysabel’s Cakes and Pastries.

Bakit nagdesisyon si Ysabel na maging negosyante sa kabila ng kanyang busy schedule sa showbiz?

Lahad ni Ysabel, “Actually nag-start yung year na ito na nasa law school ako.

“Iyon yung goal ko talaga, maging abogada ever since bata pa lang ako, iyon yung pangarap ko.

“Kaso na-realize ko na mahirap siya talaga i-juggle with showbiz!

“Kasi akala ko since nai-juggle ko naman yung college ko, baka it’s the same thing.

“Pero mahirap po talaga siya, it’s no joke. And ang taas po ng respeto ko sa mga naglo-law school!

“So naisip ko na mag-stop muna ako pero gusto ko pa rin ng something na ginagawa na maggu-grow din ako.



“So dun ako nag-decide na sige nga, try ko nga mag-business.

“Which never ko in-expect kasi hindi ko po talaga gusto

maging negosyante or businesswoman. “Pero nae-enjoy ko po siya, nagugustuhan ko po siya,” ang nakangiting sinabi pa ni Ysabel.

“So go with the flow lang po talaga ako, siyempre gusto ko pa rin ng something na out of showbiz.”

Wala raw sa plano nina Miguel at Ysabel ang magosyo sa negosyo, baka raw kasi maging dahilan pa iyon ng kanilang away.

“Hindi natin alam kung ano ang mangyayari kapag may ka-partner ka sa negosyo,” sinabi ni Miguel.

“Though confident naman kami na hindi kami mag-aaway dahil hindi naman malaking problema sa amin ang pera, pero huwag na, huwag na,” at natawa uli si Miguel.

“Enough na, na magkatrabaho kami sa showbiz,” pakli naman ni Ysabel.

Despite West Phl Sea issue, PEZA continues to woo Chinese investors

MANILA, Philippines — Despite tensions in the West Philippine Sea, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) said it continues to reach out to potential Chinese investors, adding that it is also still receiving invitations to visit the East Asian country.

“We know that it’s a cause for concern, but because we’re essentially into investment promotion, we don’t preoccupy ourselves with that. In fact our thinking is we continue on with our talking to them,

reaching out to them,” PEZA director-general Tereso Panga told reporters.

“We’ve been getting Chinese delegations because that’s one way we can mitigate the impact, and the ones coming here are also industry leaders in their own right,” he added. “We don’t allow ourselves to be affected unless there is a war already,” he added. The PEZA chief said the agency has even received invitations to visit various parts of China including Xiamen and Shanghai.

Panga said that the China Plus One policy (C+1) would be one of the strategies PEZA would be looking at to diversify the country’s sources of investments.

“The strategy of PEZA is how can we diversify our basket of eggs. It cannot be reliant on one country alone so we’re reaching out to non-traditional sources,” Panga said. Panga said the C+1 strategy can be used to attract more Taiwanese investors to the Philippines.

“As such, banking on the existing Bi-

lateral Investment Agreement and New Southbound Trade Treaty between the Philippines and Taiwan, PEZA has identified Taiwan as a priority market for outbound investment missions next year,” Panga said.

“Given Taiwan’s status as the seventh largest economy in Asia and 20th largest in the world by purchasing power parity, certainly the Philippines will benefit from its increased economic cooperation with Taiwan,” Panga said.

December Avenue members reveal juggling day jobs despite having viral hit songs

Zel Bautista: “We have to be real, you know, na we need a day job.”

December Avenue is one of the local artists that different generations in the Philippines have tuned in to.

The five-piece band has consistently crafted hit songs for 15 remarkable years, including “Candles,” “Eroplanong Papel,” “Sa Ngalan Ng Pag-Ibig,” “Bulong,” “Huling Sandali,” and “Ilang Beses Kita Mamahalin.”

Aside from its immediate ear candy appeal, their music has also garnered prestigious accolades, such as the Best Song Written for Movie/TV/Stage Play for “Huling Sandali” at The 33rd Awit Awards, the Most Popular Recording/Performing Group at the 51st Box Office Entertainment Awards, and being crowned the 2019 Most-Streamed Artist of the Philippines on Spotify, to name a few.

Composed of Zel Bautista, Jet Danao, Jem Manuel, Don Gregorio, and Gelo Cruz, the group shared stories.

“When we started, we were able to build our fanbase, starting from the bottom, wala pa rin kami sa top,” Zel, the vocalist, shared in jest.

Turning more serious, he continued, “As in, di namin iniisip yun, heto pa rin kami...”

“Meron pa rin kaming goal na tuluy-tuluy lang.”

BEHIND THE FAME

Navigating the uncertainties in the industry, December Avenue chose to persevere without compromising their daily lives.

Zel recounted, “For example, kami... we were able to pursue our career pero, of course, adulting counts, and



OPM band December Avenue—composed of (left frame, top to bottom) Jet Danao, Gelo Cruz, Zel Bautista, Don Gregorio, and Jem Manuel

we have to be real, you know, na we need a day job.

“So for the longest time we all had a day job, kumbaga parang second... priority lang yung banda...”

“Being an artist here in the Philippines, you know, if you’re not really blessed with a family na mayaman, you can’t really do art.

“Kasi it’s hard kasi you gonna pay for your bills, your transpo, tapos when you play sa gigs... you’re not getting paid, di ba? Usually it’s just exposure, just x-deal, di ba?”

That’s why the band also offered advice to aspiring and emerging artists, emphasizing patience and kindness.

Zel mentioned, “One thing that I would tell the younger ones who [want] to make it this career: you just have to persevere... you just have to be patient.”

He then quoted, “Meron akong nabasa kanina sa Facebook, ang sabi, ‘The doors of opportunities will not open unless God knows that you’re ready for it...’”

He added, “Ganun lang din yung nangyari samin, we just hold on doon sa... pangarap namin... na mag-perform on big stages, you know, for people to sing along with our music.

“And siguro hindi na rin namin napansin kung gano katagal yung journey na yun basta we kept on going, hindi kami tumigil you know... we found ways to sustain our lifestyle...”

“Just be nice to people kasi the people you see here like the productions... all of these are the people you will see when you get big din, so you just have to be nice...”

“And familiarize yourself with the business para hindi ka [rin], you know... nate-take advantage.”

Sharon Cuneta appeals to fans to donate for dogs instead of sending gifts

“Megastar” Sharon Cuneta appealed to her friends and fans to just donate to Pawssion Project Foundation instead of giving her gifts this Christmas and on her birthday in January.

In her Instagram account, Sharon said donating to the foundation means a lot to her.

“Dear Family, Friends, my Sharonians/ Sharmy, I do not expect any gifts from any of you this Christmas and on my birthday on January 6, but knowing you, you are probably already preparing gifts for me or planning to. Please - DO NOT BUY ME ANYTHING. I have way too much stuff, we are always blessed with so much food from everyone always. But if you insist like I know lots of you will, and you REALLY want to give me something that I will appreciate and truly treasure, please DONATE instead to @pawssionproject,” she wrote.

“You know how much I LOVE DOGS OF ANY AND ALL BREEDS, and it just would mean the world to me if you could give to @pawssionproject to help us keep our rescued dogs well-fed and healthy. If you would want



me to know that you have donated, you may donate in your name and add “for Sharon.” But that really won’t be necessary,” she added.

Sharon said that she will appreciate and be grateful to the people who would help the dogs in the shelter.

“Any amount or anything in kind that you give will be truly appreciated and we will be so grateful to you! THIS IS WHAT I WANT FOR THIS CHRISTMAS AND MY BIRTHDAY THAT WOULD REALLY MAKE ME HAPPIEST. Your undying love and support for me are more than enough,” she said.

“It would really fill my heart though if you give to our dogs instead of any kind of gift to me. I do not need anything more. I need all the help I can get for the animals I love so much these animals who cannot speak for themselves. If you are in Bacolod, even to just spend a day with our dogs and cats would touch my heart to no end, too,” she added.

The “Megastar” also appealed to her sponsors to

help in funding the dogs in the shelter.

“I also would like to appeal to corporations and organizations and sponsors I have met throughout all these years to please, please help. Thank you so much! I will not be accepting gifts for myself. Please, give to @pawssionproject instead and I will be forever grateful to you! God bless you all! I love you,” she said.

Miles Ocampo on first acting award: ‘Ganito po pala feeling’

Miles Ocampo won her first-ever acting award at the recently concluded 49th Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) Gabi ng Parangal last December 27. The actress emerged as the Best Supporting Actress for her performance in Family Of Two.

Miles was up against seasoned artists such as Agot Isidro (Becky and Badette), Gloria Diaz (Mallari), Alessandra de Rossi (Firefly), and Janella Salvador (Mallari).

The 26-year-old actress couldn’t believe that she finally got an award after being in the entertainment industry for two decades now.

“Hala! Six years old ako nag-start sa industriya. 27 na ako next year, first time ko nakatanggap ng award. Ganito po pala feeling ng mga

artista,” she shared.

Miles revealed how she had to think about accepting the role in the film as she recently came from her thyroid surgery prior to filming. She jokingly acknowledged that she looked like Alden Richards’s mother in the film despite being his girlfriend in the film.

“Sobrang pinag-isipan ko po kung tatanggapin ko itong project na ito. Alam ko po na kakatapos ko lang pong operahan kaya baka sabihin mukha po akong nanay ni Alden, but thank you so much to my director sa tiwala niyo po,” she added.

The Goin’ Bulilit alum showed her gratitude towards her management, the directors of the film, and her fans who continued to support her.

“Sa pamilya ko po... Pina-practice ko lang to dati, may award na tayo! Sa lahat

ng hanggang ngayon naniniwala sa kaya ko, maraming-maraming salamat po,” she said.

“Lord, andami po nangyari ngayong taon, pero thank you po. Thank you po sa lahat ng bumubuo ng MMFF, marami pong salamat,” she ended.

Miles rose to fame as part of the comedy show Goin’ Bulilit and the hit television series Mga Anghel na Walang Langit. Since then, the actress has starred in different series and films.

Herlene Budol to drop single 'Kain Tayo' in 2024 after viral text scandal



Herlene Budol (right) taking voice lessons.

More than a week after the leak of her alleged intimate conversations with "Magandang Dilag" co-star Rob Gomez, Herlene Budol announced that she will release a new single called "Kain Tayo" in 2024.

Budol was involved in a controversy with Gomez after screenshots of their text exchanges were leaked on the latter's social media platforms earlier this month, which hinted at an apparent sexual relationship between the two. Also lumped in the issue was "Magandang Dilag" co-star Bianca Manalo, who supposedly asked the actor to visit her because a certain someone was already in Valenzuela.

Both actresses, however, denied any involvement with Gomez, while the actor claimed that he didn't have any access to his phone, seemingly alluding that the messages were posted without his knowledge.

Days later, Budol seemed to have moved on from the scandal as she announced her new single on Instagram on Thursday, Dec. 28, whose title is a reference to one of her messages to Gomez.

"Thank you Mima ko @sirwil75. Yung [kahit hindi na cya Manager ko pero andyan parin cya thru thick [and] thin at pinupush nya ako mag voice lesson... masaya pala ang musika (Thank you Wilbert Tolentino. He may not be my manager anymore, but he's there for me through thick and thin. He even urged me to take voice lessons. I didn't know music can be fun)," she wrote.

The former beauty queen said she's currently being trained by a music coach to sing in different genres while revealing the title of her new single.

"Yung may assesment ng coach ko si @kimusikero ng Jazz, Pop, Ballad, Blues, Rock, Hip hop, Classical, Electro, New age, Reggae [at iba pa]. Ciembre Abangan ang bagong Single na ilalabas ko sa 2024, 'Kain Tayo,'" she wrote.

(I have an assessment with a music coach in different genres like jazz, pop, ballad, blues, rock, hip hop, classical, electro, new age, reggae and more. Of course, don't miss out on my new single that will be out in 2024, called "Kain Tayo.")

Budol's announcement caught most of her followers off guard, as seen in the comments of her post, with some accusing her of having no shame. Others praised her for appearing to be unbothered after the controversy.

Despite the controversy, Budol stressed that her alleged conversations with Gomez were blown out of proportion and that she was merely going along with the latter's jokes even though she knew that she was being flirted with.

Gomez, on the other hand, has yet to outrightly confirm or deny the rumors with both of his "Magandang Dilag" co-stars, but he seemed to be winning former beauty queen Shaila Rebordera back as he posted photos of their daughter Amelia's baptism on social media.

Sharon Cuneta dispels rumored breakup with Kiko Pangilinan: "Nagtatampo ako pero okay kami."

Kiko Pangilinan: "Lahat ng mga mag-asawa, may kanya-kanyang dinadaan din."

Sunud-sunud ang cryptic posts ni Sharon Cuneta sa kanyang social media nitong mga nakaraang araw.

Pero minsan ay wala siyang caption dito. Puro lamang ito quote card.

Nang mag-post si Sharon ng larawan niya kasama ang apat na anak habang putol ang ulo ng mister na si Kiko Pangilinan, naghinala ang netizens na may pinagdararaan ang mag-asawa.

Naalarama ang ilan nilang tagahanga.

Pero binura naman ito ni Sharon.

Kagabi, December 27, sa Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2023 Gabi ng Parangal, kumpleto ang pamilya ni Sharon na dumalo sa okasyon.

Kasama ng Megastar si Kiko at mga anak na sina Frankie, Miel, at Miguel Pangilinan.

Caption pa niya sa post bago tumungo ng New Frontier Theater sa Cubao, "Pamilya Ficture papunta po sa MMFF Gabi ng Parangal ngayon. Live po ngayon sa FBI!"

Sa red carpet, nakapanayam ng ilang media ang mag-asawa at naitanong sa kanila ang tungkol dito.

Kuwento ni Kiko, "Hindi exempted ang anumang marriage sa



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Life's brighter under the sun



mga pagsubok. E, ganun lang talaga.

"Ang kaibahan lang sa amin, siyempre very public, di ba? Pero lahat ng mga mag-asawa, may kanya-kanyang dinadaan din."

Paliwanag ni Sharon, kapag daw may lover's quarrel sila ay nagagawa niya ang mga ito.

Aniya, "Siyempre, nag-e-LQ kami minsan, nagtatampo ako pero okay kami, okay kami. The family is here. You know my husband is very quiet."

Huling inamin ni Sharon na may LQ sila ng asawa noong nakaraang taon na umabot ng halos anim na buwan.



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Smaller Parties but still Happy

I noticed that this Christmas season, some are holding their get-togethers on the weekdays.

WTF!

Wednesday Thursday Friday!

Or any day at all.

It doesn't matter if it's big or small parties. Cost-wise, it's a good idea because weekday venue rentals cost less.

The problem is people like me are forgetful. I only check my phone calendar during Fridays to Sunday because I am used to attending events only on week-

ends. I forget to check during weekdays. So far, and regrettably, I missed one weekday dinner this year. It's from Philip Beloso of Dolorosa this summer. 😞

Last december, I received an invitation on a Wednesday but was not able to attend.

Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) held their appreciation dinner for their

volunteers and supporters at Burrows Hall.

Sanib Saya (SS), a charity dinner for seniors followed at the Mt. Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church Hall at 140 St. Regis Crescent South, North York, Toronto attended by 300 guests. (STORY IN THIS ISSUE) They gave away 100 bags of rice and 150 gift bags to needy recipients like seniors, caregivers and international students. It is usually held at The Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT) but it is undergoing renovations.



MH Productions

"Next year, we'll try to give 300 bags of rice," said Nitz Rejdik, one of the founders of SS.

Toronto Lions Kapuso followed with their Christmas dinner and induction (STORY IN THIS ISSUE) of new members at Rembrandt Banquet Hall

On the same venue, just across were two celebrations going on. One was Tala Entertainment's Christmas party. The other was by Liberal MP John McKay.

Marky Hugh MH productions held their party at the Patricia Kem p

Community Centre.

However, the swankiest, flashiest party so far, in it's second year is the Pinoy Ontario Vendors gala night at Peter and Paul Banquet Hall. Just like last year, it was held on December 26.

"Last night, we celebrated the incredible accomplishments and hard work of Filipino small businesses across the province with Pinoy Ontario Vendors! It was so great celebrating with so many familiar faces, thank you for having me," said special guest Liberal MP Rechie Valdez, also the cabinet Minister for Small Business. Consul General Angela Escalona was also a special guest.

With this, I bid everybody God Bels and Good Night.

Toronto Kapuso Lions Accept Lions International Mission 1.5 Challenge



Lions worldwide are on a mission to grow its membership to 1.5 million by 2027. The goal of this global initiative is to better meet the growing needs of communities and serve more people than ever before. The initiative provides resources to revitalize existing clubs, charter new ones and inspire all Lions through fellowship and service.

In answer to this challenge, the Toronto Kapuso Lions Club recently increased its membership by twelve. Added to the Club's membership roster during a well-attended Induction Ceremonies and Christmas Party

Toronto Lions Kapuso Club officers welcome the new members.

were: Ann Nacpil, Christopher Mills, Anlyn Aryo, Gladys Canto, Juliet Cayetano, Leo dela Cruz, Merinisa dela Cruz, Neil Funk, Rovina Lazaro, Florida Perdinias, Maria Tanglao and Bal Yujuico.

The new members were inducted by Lions Club District A711 Governor Ann Stevens. Also in attendance during the event were the Deputy Consul General Kerwin Orville Tate of the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto, International Director Candidate PDG Dan Sibanda, Immediate Past District Governor Ferdinand Coronel, and other Li-

ons Club officers and guests.

Recognition was bestowed by Lions District A711 Officers the Toronto Kapuso Lions Club with the Lions Club International Club Excellence Award for Lion Year 2022-2023. Club Secretary Fe Paca-Taduran was also given the District Governor Secretary's Award for Lion Year 2022-2023.

The Club recognized Immediate Past President Judith Gonzales, 2nd Vice-President Alison Chan, Treasurer Velona Daliva, Secretary Fe Paca-Taduran and Lion Mitzi Faigal for their outstanding contribution to Club activities for the year.

Among the Club service activities for the year were:

- Hunger Projects - Feed Scarborough Rouge Park Food Bank & Mount Zion Baptist Church Food Bank for International Students
- Humanitarian Project - Built 3 septic tank toilets for indigenous Mangyans of in mountains of Oriental Mindoro
- Environmental Projects - Clean-up of Morningside Park on Earth Day; Tree Planting at L'Amoreaux Park in Scarborough, Topcliff Park in North York and Mayantoc River in Tarlac, Philippines

- Youth Project - Provided school supplies and internet access for school children of Canlumay & Palati in Odiongan, Romblon, Philippines
- Vision Project - Collected new and used eyeglasses sent for recycling in Calgary and delivered to qualified missions around the world.
- Diabetes Project - Conducted a Diabetes Information Session with Dr. Nicki Enriquez.
- Childhood Cancer - in its planning stages. Beneficiary of Christmas Party proceeds.

Ellen Adarna clarifies she's not anti-LGBTQ+ despite viral

Former actress Ellen Adarna recently issued her clarificatory statement regarding the confusion she faces with the proper usage of LGBTQ+ pronouns.

Ellen recently drew flak from netizens when she expressed her views on "situationship," stating that "it is as confusing as the non-binary gender [and] pronouns that are out right now."

Miss Trans Global and LGBTQ+ advocate Mela Habijan publicly addressed Ellen through an open letter on her social media platforms.

While acknowledging Ellen's expression of thoughts, Mela emphasized that a compassionate and respectful person should

strive to learn and understand the matter in question.

"Understanding that there is gender diversity—kahit gaano man ito kasakit sa bangs mo—won't hurt you. But it will help you gain a deeper appreciation of human life," Mela wrote.

In a post via Instagram Story, Ellen addressed the criticism, but it seemed she's still confused with the significance of learning and using inclusive language, implying that the "silent majority" is more focused on other priorities.

She shared a post from an Instagram follower and added a caption, "Got a lot of DMs like this from the LGBT++ (sorry if

may kulang) baka ma-offend na naman kasi kulang [smiling face emoji] baka ma-open letter na naman tayo [laughing emoji] based on comments and some messages I received, the silent majority have more important things to do in life than have a Master or PhD in pronouns ++."

In a later post, Ellen responded to another Instagram follower and emphasized that her uncertainty about using LGBTQ+ pronouns doesn't imply any opposition to their cause.

The Instagram follower messaged her saying: "Didn't you know you were an-



comments on pronoun confusion

ti-LGBT? OMG I am unfollowing [you]."

Ellen responded, "Sino nagsabi? You? Fake news? My best friend since high school is lesbian, I have a lot of close friends who are gay."

"I'm not anti-[LGBTQ+], I love them. Na-confuse lang ako sa pronouns, anti na? Umayos ka nga...kung gusto mo block kita."

Despite the criticism, Ellen doesn't let the haters bother her.

In another post on Instagram Story, she said that what matters most to her are the opinions of the people close to her.

She said, "If you're a follower for quite a while, I think, you know, it's obvious that I'm not a people pleaser.

"And yeah, hate comes along with that. And I'm used to it. And I don't have any problems on being hated at all.

"They can hate all they want. I don't know them naman, you know.

"What worries me... if the people that I love and I care about hates me, but they don't. It's okay. Life goes on."

And to her bashers, she left a message: "I have bashers? Haters? Uso pa ba yan? But my message is to my bashers and haters, I want 1 trillion... 100 trillion euros."

Sanib Saya Toronto Brings Christmas Holiday Cheers

SANIB from page 5

who joined the celebration were Frank Cruzet, Theresa Lumanlan, Monina Serrano, Ben Ferrer, Danny Orbillo, Wendy Arena, Joey Baking, members of the FCT Painting Art Group,



1 and other community & church



2 members.



3 With potluck food, snacks,

1. Consul general Angela Escalona joins the festivities; 2. One hundred bags of rice and 150 gift bags were given to seniors, caregivers and international student; 3. Fervent messages of hope and inspiration were delivered by Christine Santos, Kimberly Domingo-Talibas, a cancer survivor and Steve Pagao,

beverages, and "kakanin" donations aplenty, the attendees and volunteers savored the festive atmo-

SANIB page 23

Calendar Girls of 2024

CALENDAR from p1 keting strategy this year.

Julia Barreto is Tanduary's 2024 Calendar Girl

Actress Julia Barreto opened up about her experience as Tanduary's Calendar Girl for 2024. She revealed that her boyfriend, Gerald Anderson, and her family approved of her sexy pictorial, thus it wasn't a hard decision for her to do it.

Reflecting on her role as the calendar girl, Julia emphasized the empowering nature of the experience, stating that she feels secure in herself and her support system.

For Tanduary, Julia is the perfect woman to represent courage, empowerment, and resiliency

"From the very beginning, as always, and anything that I do, laging involved my family and my loved ones and, of course, also my partner," Barreto said. "This is something

they knew before I accepted it and even the shoot." "I'm blessed to have such a strong support system; it's a significant factor. It's a confidence booster," she added gratefully.

Heaven Peralejo is Ginebra San Miguel's Calendar Girl for 2024

Heaven Peralejo graces 2024 GSM calendar embodying the spirit of Philippine fiestas



Young actress Heaven Peralejo has been unveiled **CALENDAR** page 12



Rebels Smash takes home gold at the 17U Challenge Cup, Select B. Smash had an amazing third set gold medal match with a 16-14 comeback after being down 9-13 against Perkmen Gold!

Kim Chiu flaunts figure, grateful for 'everything in between' after breakup with Xian Lim

Kim Chiu is seemingly enjoying her life, days after confirming her split with longtime boyfriend Xian Lim, as she spoke about being grateful for "everything in between."

In a series of Instagram posts since announcing her breakup with Lim, Chiu flaunted her toned physique in a dark-green two-piece swimsuit by the sunset, at what seemed to be the actress' relaxing getaway in Balesin.

"Opacarophile," she captioned her post dated Dec. 26, which refers to someone who loves sunsets.

"Grateful for small things, big things,

Lizzy Trovato and her team Durhamrebelsmash wins the 17U OVA Challenge Cup in Toronto. She had her birthday celebration later in the evening.



and everything in between," she further added. The actress' post earned the support of her fol-

lowers in the comments, with some taking apparent jabs at Lim and some others expressing their support for her single journey.

Chiu was accompanied by her family in her short break, as seen from her recent Instagram posts, where they appeared to spend Christmas on the tropical island.

Chiu confirmed she and Lim parted ways after a 12-year romance in an official statement on social media last Dec. 23, where she admitted that "sometimes love is not enough."

Minutes later on his Instagram account, Lim thanked the actress for the "unconditional love" they shared, as he hoped that she would find "all the happiness and love" she is looking for.

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Bicol Canada Community Association



1. Earl Francis Oriño Dacara poses with some of his painting at the BCA Christmas party; 2. Deputy Consul General Kerwin Orville Tate (5TH FROM LEFT) of the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto was the special guest.



Diana Zubiri reacts to “feeling artista,” “feeling entitled” tags after unpleasant experience in Louis Vuitton shop

Diana Zubiri is receiving backlash from some netizens for recent vlog.

Sinagot ni Diana Zubiri ang mga paratang na “feeling entitled” at “feeling artista” siya kasunod ng vlog kung saan inilahad niyang nakaranas siya ng pang-iisnab mula sa isang luxury brand shop.

Si Diana at kanyang pamilya ay nakatira sa Adelaide.

Hindi man niya tahasang sinabi, malinaw na ipinahiwatig ni Diana na nakaranas sila ng diskriminasyon mula sa staff members ng high-end shop.

Discrimination

Banat ng isa pa: “Why make a big fuss, wag feeling artista everywhere na dapat kilala ka lagi”

Pagkontra ng aktres “obviously u didn’t watch the vlog haha I didn’t ask nor expect to be treated differently. Simply comparing 2 different visits 1 being better than the other.”

Sermon naman ng isa, kapag namimili sa isang shop hindi na kailangan mag-video pa.

Sinabi naman ng isa pa, hinuhusgahan ang mga kliyente batay sa kanilang hitsura. May pagsang-ayon dito si Diana.



Sabi ng isa, hindi naman racist ang staff pero kailangan ng appointment.

Sabi ni Diana, may ibang shop na humihingi ng appointment pero meron ding hindi.

Pero may ilan ding nagbahagi na naging maganda ang trato sa kanila nang pumasok sila sa branch ng store.

Sinabi ni Diana na ganoon dapat ang tratong makuha ng possible customers. Sinabi rin ng aktres na maganda naman ang karanasan niya sa branch sa Melbourne.

Nagkomento ang isang netizen na kasama ito sa “marketing strategy” na gumagamit umano ng reverse psychology sa customers para bumalik at bumili.

Sagot ni Diana, unang beses niya itong narinig pero mukhang umubra sa kanya dahil bumalik siya sa shop.

May mga lumabas nang foreign essays tungkol sa ganitong marketing strategy ng luxury brands.

Ang end goal ay magmukhang exclusive at desirable ang kanilang items.

Umubra ito sa buyers na may purchasing power at nais maituring na special customers.

Para naman sa ibang customers na hindi natrato nang tama, naglalabas din sila ng pera para patunayang kaya nilang bumili ng mahalang gamit at nang tratuhin sila nang tama.

Pero sa bandang huli, sa dalawang halimbawang nabanggit, ang shop lamang ang talagang nakinabang.

Jason Paul Laxamana was stunned I did it in one of the scenes!”

For the actor, who was admittedly on the cusp of exploring all possibilities, “I’d say it was more of a gut feel. I felt that by doing that, it would be of help to the story. And it was! Of course, that was opposed to other directors’ instructions to go slightly daring when it wasn’t necessary at all.”

Marco never loses count of the number of times he had similar exposures on the big screen.

“But I must say that the last one would be the last,” he declared.

As much as he can, Marco tries to dodge film assignments that take interest in him, going way too bold.

“Granting I go sexier in this movie, people expect me to outdo it in my next film and so on. If I’d have shown everything to the world, what else is there to offer? Wala na [no more], right?”

So, is Marco implying that doing frontal nudity next time around is a no-no? “Yeah! I’ve already reached my ‘quota.’ But most importantly, it’s a personal decision.”

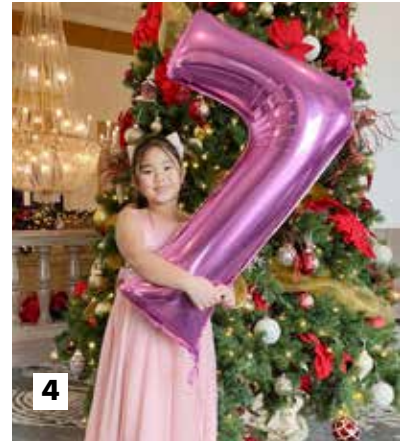
In what sense is it?

Clearing his throat, Marco sheepishly replied, “May magalalit na kasi,” then laughs. [There’s someone bound to get angry now].

Of course, Marco need not say who. But definitely, this is their first sugary Christmas together.



3. Happy Birthday Noel Perada



4



5

4. Happy 7th birthday Aryan Perez

5. Happy Birthday Ian Santillan, Eva Agpaoa, and Cecille Araneta

CALENDAR from page 11

as Ginebra San Miguel’s Calendar Girl for 2024.

Expressing her enthusiasm about the endorsement, Heaven fondly recalled her first taste of Ginebra at the age of 18, marking the beginning of a cherished relationship with the iconic brand.

“I’ve always admired Ginebra San Miguel’s rich heritage and its deep connection to Filipino culture,” shared Heaven. “Being named the calendar girl is a dream come true, and I’m incredibly honored to represent this brand that I’ve come to love.”

Centered on the theme “Philippine Fiesta,” the 2024 Ginebra San Miguel Calendar showcases six captivating layouts, each inspired by the vibrant and diverse fiestas that color the Philippine landscape.

CALENDAR p15



FAMILY DENTISTRY

Dr. Vicky Santiago & Associates Christmas Luncheon

May the magic of Christmas fill your heart and home with joy — now and always.

“It’s not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.”

Mother Teresa

May the new year bless you with health, wealth, and happiness.

SCENE CITY



1. Domz Kylie, MP John McKay and Teresa Sevilla; 2. Carolyn McKay, John McKay, Ian Glyn Williams & Teresa Sevilla; 3. Pinoy Ontario Vendors' (POV) gala night chair Michelle Madrigal, Liberal MP Richie Valdez, also the cabinet Minister for Small Business and POV founder and President Paulo Bucud (PHOTO BY RAMON MIRAS); 4. POV Gala King and Queen (PHOTO BY RAMON MIRAS); 5. Marky Hugh and Tala Entertainment owner Yana Alvaro react excitedly as the bouquet she threw landed on my feet as I entered the Rembrandt ballroom at the Tala Christmas party; 6. Joy D'Aoust brings her daughter Winterra at the Tala party.

Michelle Madrigal reveals she's a survivor of child sexual abuse: 'I carried this burden alone'

"Star Circle Quest" alum Michelle Madrigal is ending the year on a more empowered note as she opened up about surviving sexual abuse at a time when her "innocence was cruelly taken" amid her "tumultuous adolescence."

On her Instagram account Saturday, Dec. 30, Madrigal revealed that she was a survivor of sexual abuse as a child, saying she "endured sexual abuse at a tender age for a number of years." She did not disclose her abuser's identity.

"Unaware I was experiencing PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], I carried this burden alone until I sought help from a therapist at

20. For nearly a decade, I held onto something that was finally released when I opened up. Understanding my rebellious phase suddenly made sense," she wrote.

The former actress then admitted that she sought solace in "drugs and alcohol" as a way of escaping "overwhelming emotions, unworthiness, and fear" when she was younger.

"Understanding my rebellious phase suddenly made sense. Shame and self-blame consumed me for years," she recalled while reminiscing on her younger years. "I often questioned why it happened to me."

This painful experience led to Madrigal using her story as a guiding force to "empower others to step forward and begin their healing journey," as she discovered that "three out of five" of women undergo "some form of sexual abuse."

"My purpose in life is clear: to support survivors. I've always yearned to use my voice for a greater cause, and my mission is to help one survivor at a time feel acknowledged and secure, reassuring them that their story is significant," she said. "As a mother, it's my paramount responsibility to educate my daughter about these realities."

While noting her sentiments as a mom, Madrigal said "past generations often lacked the knowledge and tools" to address issues like sexual abuse, which ultimately resulted in some victims sweeping it under the rug.

"Many children don't feel safe enough to confide in anyone, let alone their parents, about their experiences. I'm determined to change that narrative, to extend a helping hand, and foster an environment where openness and support prevail," she added.

Madrigal, who was active in Filipino show biz until 2016, is currently based in Texas in the US where she works as a real estate agent and a model.



TORONTO LIONS KAPUSO CLUB



1. Girl selling raffle tickets to help children with cancer whispers something to Judith Gonzales; 2. Deputy Consul General Kerwin Orville Tate of the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto was the keynote speaker; 3. Fe Paca Taturan receives a certificate of appreciation for leadership; 4. District Governor Ann Stevens inducts the new members; 5. Ellen Galorport poses with new inductee Juliet Cayetano; 6. Certificate of appreciation recipients pose for a photo.

Paraiso Beer Joins Tanduay & Ginebra with it's Calendar Girls this 2024

CALENDAR from page 12

scape.

Serving as more than just an artistic showcase, the 2024 Ginebra San Miguel Calendar holds a significant place in the brand's illustrious history, commemorating its 190th anniversary. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the calendar stands as a testament to Ginebra San Miguel's enduring legacy of crafting iconic moments and flavors that have become an integral part of Filipino festivities for nearly two centuries.

Nadine Lustre introduced as calendar girl of local beer brand

Actress and singer Nadine Lustre has achieved another milestone in her career as she takes on the role of a calendar girl for local beer brand Paraiso.

This project marks Lustre's first-ever



stint as a calendar girl, adding to her list of accomplishments.

Expressing her gratitude for this incredible opportunity, Lustre shared her excitement, stating, "I am really happy that my first calendar is with Paraiso because they are very collaborative."

"I'm very specific when it comes to the things that I do like, I don't like doing things I'm not really comfortable with. We all know

as a calendar girl it's a bit daring, 'di ba?

"I mean, people are used to see me in daring photos but it's different. They were gracious enough to ask me kung sino preferred ko na team na photographer and with the layout and the poses," she explained.

When asked if this would be the start of showing more skin on screen or accepting more daring roles, Lustre answered: "I don't know if I'm going to be ready for that, maybe not. As long as it's something I'm comfortable with."

Vhong Navarro recalls past "tampo" with Billy Crawford

Sumama ba ang loob ni Vhong Navarro nang mag-resign sa It's Showtime si Billy Crawford at naging host ng katapat na noontime show sa ibang TV network?

Nilisan ni Billy ang It's Showtime noong 2018, at eventually ay naging main host ng Tropang LOL (Laugh Out Loud), ang itinatap na noontime show ng TV5 (2020-2023).

"Alam mo kung saan ako nagtampo? Nung nag-resign siya sa Showtime," sagot ni Vhong kay Ogie sa isang video sa YouTube channel ni Vhong nitong December 17, 2023.

Pakiramdam daw kasi ni Vhong ay nawalan siya ng partner. Sila kasi ni Billy ang na-establish na partners sa programa. Ibinahagi pa ni Vhong na sinabihan silang maging tandem noong binubuo pa lamang ang It's Showtime. Lahad niya, "Kaya siya nilagay doon, para ka-tandem ko. Tagasalo, yun yon."

"Kaya nung nawala siya, sobrang miss ko siya, hindi lang sa sayaw, sa prod, sa 'Magpasikat,' pati dun sa hosting..."

"That time, kailangan niyang maging family man.

Kailangan niyang mag-concentrate sa pagbuo niya ng pamilya niya.

Inamin din ni Vhong na nagkaroon sila ng malalim na usapan ni Billy kasunod ng pagre-resign ng huli.

"Iyakan sa telepono, lahat. Malalim. Mai-intindihan mo, e. Meron siyang pinanggagalingan nung time na yon."

Matatandaan ding nagkaroon ng amat ang relasyon noon nina Billy at Vice Ganda, na isa rin sa main hosts ng It's Showtime.

Pero natapos iyon sa guest appearance ni Billy sa dating kinabibilangang noontime show at humingi ng sorry



kay Vice.

Bagamat hindi na kabilang si Billy sa It's Showtime, sinabi ni Vhong na patuloy pa rin ang komunikasyon nila.

"Si Billy, nagtatawagan kami. Nagkakarala pa kami ng basketball, nangangamustahan kami."

"Si Billy, malapit sa puso ko yan. Brother ko yan."

Tinanong ni Ogie si Vhong kung gusto ba niyang bumalik sa programa si Billy.

Sagot ni Vhong, "Kung puwede talagang makabalik, why not?"

Fil-Can Teachers Hold Christmas and Officers Induction Rites

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

During the celebration of the December holiday season, the Philippine Teachers Association of Canada (PTAC) conducted its 17th Annual Christmas Party as well as the official induction of the officers and members of the new Executive Directorate on December 9, 2023, at the Earl Bales Park Community Centre, North York, Toronto, Ontario. PTAC, formed in 2006, is a not-for-profit and volunteer-run socio-professional organization of Filipino-descent education professionals who are practicing Ontario certified teachers, and former educators in the Philippines.

Among those inducted for the 2023-2025 term are Executive Officers- President: Cielito L. Drapeza, Vice Presidents: Maria G. Bernasor, Marissa Ciacico, Richard Vinluan, Secretary: Mary Ann Santos, Asst. Secretary: Joy Caliva, Treasurer: Marcial Singson, Asst Treasurer: Donna Scutariu, Bus. Manager: Analiza Mateo, Asst Bus Manager: Grace Dela Reyna, Auditor: France Ampico, Asst Auditor: Mary Ann Alaiza, PRO: Alex Gabrito, Asst PRO: Aurora Estopacia, and Board Directors: Rose Apilado, Sun-



The newly inducted PTAC Officers and Directors with Rose Apilado & Tony A. San Juan

shine Avelino, Veberly Belo, Etta Madamba, Zeny Ramos, Doris Redondo, Donnabel

Reid, Rowena Sagun, Annie Singson, Celine Villa, and Maria Teresa Vinluan. They were sworn in by Tony A. San Juan, PTAC's director emeritus, and especially witnessed by over 100 guests and PTAC Past Presidents Rose A. Apilado and Boni Curutan.

The 4-hour lively afternoon program ably hosted by Veberly Belo and Rowena Sagun includes a solemn invocation by Celine Villa, warm welcome remarks by Richard Vinluan, nice intermission number by Mariella Bernasor and Roan

Galman and a "Pasko na Naman" superb special dance performance by Etta del Rosario, France Ampico, Donna Scutariu, Grace de la Reyna, MaryAnn Alaiza, and Ester Dulawan. Maria G. Bernasor enthusiastically led the program opening and the Land Acknowledgment, and facilitated the games and exchange gifts while Joy Caliva recited the grace-before-meal. During the community song and dance portions, Marissa Ciacico, Ariel Drapeza, France Ampico, Veberly Belo, and Jake Garcia encouragingly engaged the holiday revelers to join the on-the-spot activities. Cielito Drapeza seriously supervised the fund-raising drive and Marcial Singson delivered the closing

remarks with heartfelt "pasasalamat" and inspirational thoughts.

Filipino food galore, "kakanins" (desserts), and beverages aplenty were the "de rigueur" and self-served at the celebration. Likewise, the guests were treated to a sumptuous "Pinoy lechon" (roast pork) and chocolate cake courtesy of the December birthday celebrators Etta del Rosario, Gigi Reyes, France Ampico, and Maria G. Bernasor. Bidding goodbyes with potluck free-food take aways was certainly a good cultural "Pinoy" tradition.

The celebration was proudly observed as a great day of sharing, giving, fellowship, greetings and warm wishes with lots of photo ops and joyful demonstration of true Christian spirit. From the inspiring words of the "Aleng Pangulo" (Madam President), Cielito L. Drapeza said that the successful event was a collaborative showcase of PTAC's "generosity of time, talent, and treasure". It was indeed a validation that PTAC is "useful socially and professionally, and a proven community, a community by choice". (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

What newcomer Zeinab learned from shooting first-ever love scene with Derek

“Was that really me?”
This was what social media influencer-turned-actress Zeinab Harake recalled asking herself the first time she watched a clip of her love scene with Derek Ramsay in the horror-thriller “Kampon.”

“He’s the first guy I’ve ever kissed who isn’t my real-life romantic partner. It was crazy! When I saw a clip of what we did for the movie, I

couldn’t believe that I was seeing myself. I used to just watch him do love scenes with the likes of Anne Curtis, but now,

he’s doing it with me. I’m not sure if that’s a good thing, but it sounded funny saying it now. Nailaban naman, but it was really intense,” Zeinab told reporters during the recent media gathering to promote the 2023 Metro Manila Film Festival entry.

“Kampon” is the story of childless couple Clark (Derek) and Eileen (Beauty Gonzalez). One day, a child named Jade knocks at their door claiming to be Clark’s daughter. Despite the unexpected situation, Eileen accepts the child, who appears to usher in sinister tidings. Zeinab, as Loreta, plays Jade’s biological mom.

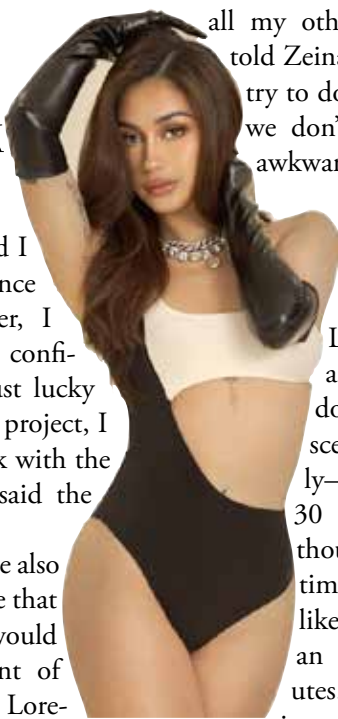
“I did the scene with the guidance of Sir Derek and Direk King (Palisoc). They suggested things that I could do while on the scene. While we were shooting it, I kept wishing for it to turn out well on-

screen. They said I did good, but since I’m a newcomer, I didn’t feel so confident yet. I’m just lucky that for my first project, I was able to work with the two of them,” said the 25-year-old.

Zeinab said she also had to make sure that her audience would not see any hint of her real personality in Loreta.

“My character and I are so different in terms of personality. I had to make sure that I was showing Loreta’s facial expressions during the love scene and not Zeinab’s. That’s what I kept reminding myself throughout the shoot,” she said.

When asked to explain why Zeinab described their reel-life lovemaking as “intense,” Derek replied: “It was a one-night stand, so our love scene was different from the one with Beauty, who I’m trying to conceive a child with. Ours was kind of rough. We had to show lust, not love, so there was a lot of lip biting. At one point, Zeinab even hit my head against the wall. Yes, it had to be intense. Direk liked what we did and even went inside the room to say, ‘Wow.’ Just like what I always do with



all my other love scenes, I told Zeinab that we should try to do it in one take so we don’t end up feeling awkward.”

Derek continued: “I saw Zeinab transform into her character Loreta at a snap of a finger. We were done shooting the scene quite quickly—maybe after 30 minutes—even though it was her first time to do something like that. But it was an intense 30 minutes. I couldn’t believe it was her first time doing it—that’s how good Zeinab was. Again, her transformation into her character was instant. She went straight for it.”

No awkward feeling

Zeinab swore she never felt violated while doing the love scene. “There was no love between them during the scene, kaya grabe si Sir Derek. But everything was done professionally. I never felt like he took advantage of me. There was no awkward feeling, too. It’s because I listened to his suggestions and to our director’s,” she insisted.

Zeinab said it also helped that she attended an acting workshop prior to shooting the film. “This wasn’t just for the love scene, but to help me create my character Loreta. My management (Aguila Entertainment) really made sure that I was ready for my first acting project. They were very hands-on. This is also why I really gave my all to this movie,” she declared.

SHOWBITS

Boobay explains absent seizure after unresponsiveness during Boy Abunda interview

Boobay, who became unresponsive while in the middle of a “Fast Talk with Boy Abunda” interview eight months ago, explained the reason behind his unexpected health scare, saying it became a wake-up call for him to prioritize his health at all times.



Last April, Boobay, whose real name is Norman Balbuena, caused alarm while being interviewed by Abunda after he suddenly couldn’t speak and continuously nodded while looking at

the latter. This caused the TV host to hug the comedian before asking the director to take a short break.

During the talk show’s Dec. 28 episode, a more energetic Boobay explained that the “unexpected” moment was caused by “absent seizure,” which occurs when too many things are happening in the brain at once. He added that it was also as an effect of his mild stroke in 2016.

“Hindi ko inakala kasi biglaan ang nangyari na tinatawag na ‘absent seizure,’ or ‘yung bigla-bigla na lang nagha-hang,” he said. “Nangyayari pala ‘yun kapag nagkakaroon ng ‘too much na pangyayari’ sa brain mo at mas nag-trigger after mangyari sa’kin na mild stroke, or parang may lamat na raw ang brain ko, noong 2016. Siguro nangyari pala ‘yun dati, hindi ko lang alam.”

Boobay also confessed that he was very nervous during his previous appearance at the show, and that he initially couldn’t watch clips of himself going through an absent seizure on social media.

“Ngayon ko lang napanood. Hindi ako tumitingin, lalo sa TikTok. Kapag sinabi mong Boobay, ‘yun agad ang lumalabas. Hindi ko siya pinapanood. Pero ngayong napanood ko na, puro ganoon pala ako nang ganoon. Hindi ko alam ang ginagawa ko diyan,” he said, while nodding continuously in an attempt to make light of the incident.

The comedian also opened up about dealing with lack of sleep prior to his viral guest appearance.

“Isa po sa mga nagti-trigger [sa ‘absent seizure’] is kapag kinakabahan ka palagi,” he said. “At the same time, kasama na d’un ‘yung lack of sleep kaya very important na relaxed ka palagi dapat. Ang maganda po, nagpapasalamat ako kay Lord lalo kasi parang naging eye opener yon sa ating mga Kapuso na pahalagahan ‘yung pahinga.”

According to health platform webMD, an absent seizure occurs when “abnormal activity” happens in the brain, and it usually lasts between 10 and 30 seconds. This causes the person to “abruptly” stop what they’re doing then stare into space.

Esther Lahbati says Sarah and Richard Gutierrez now simply co-parenting

Sarah Lahbati and Richard Gutierrez need not talk about the current state of their marriage.

Their respective moms are already doing it for them.

Just recently, Sarah’s mom Esther, let slip a mouthful about it on social media, revealing her daughter and Richard have agreed to simply “co-parent” relating their children, Zion and Kai.

She also shared that the kids spent Christmas with their mom and not with the Gutierrez’s.

She posted: “Na kay Sarah sina zion at Kai...Co parenting sila ng tatay.”

This runs counter to Richard’s mom Anabelle’s earlier declaration that all

of them as with his son’s kids will fly to Japan for the holidays.

“Sama-sama buong pamilya ko... minus one lang,” said Anabelle in an interview with ABS-CBN News.

She didn’t name the individual but many believe she was pertaining to Sarah. Asked about Sarah she said, “Hindi ko siya kinakausap. Wala akong time makipag-usap sa kanya.” Note Anabelle didn’t confirm nor deny rumors about Sarah and Richard having already parted ways, but she said more than enough admitting that her son has been living with her for some time already. She related, “Si Richard, nasa bahay ko ngayon, one month na. Pero unti-unti siyang lumilipat ng gamit sa Alabang. Lilipat na siya after Christmas.” In a separate social media post, Esther made clear her support for Sarah, saying, “We Love you so much Anak. No one can hurt you! I am ready to stand for you. Being a human being I respect everyone’s rights.” This is not the first time the two mothers didn’t see eye to eye. Back in 2014, Esther made public that she was hurt with the way Anabelle treated her at Zion’s first birthday party.

It isn’t clear what it was exactly that Anabelle did but it all ended a year later with the two exchanging gifts on Christmas.



Anne Curtis enters 2024 with new flower tattoo

Host-actress Anne Curtis marked the end of 2023 by showing off her latest tattoo.

Anne posted an Instagram a topless photo of herself displaying the new tattoo she got on her left side rib — several flowers including a dahlia — from a Los Angeles-based celebrity



tattoo artist.

The dahlia is Anne’s favorite flower, hence why she and husband Erwan Heussaff gave their daughter that name.

Dahlia was also the name of the very first character Anne portrayed on film, Dahlia “Lil” Macapagal from the 1997

movie “Magic Kingdom: Ang Alamat ng Damortis.”

Anne’s mother Carmencita Ojales loves flowers and has a garden in their Melbourne home in Australia, another possible reason for why she decided on flowers as her next tattoo design.

Anne and her family celebrated the New Year in Australia.

‘Would’ve been a family of 4 or 5’: Empress Schuck reveals miscarriage

Actress Empress Schuck revealed she suffered a miscarriage toward the end of last year.

Empress posted on Instagram black and white photos of the initial announcement that she and husband Vito Guingona were expecting again, which led to fans mistakenly congratulating her.

The photos include a sonogram of two embryos from last November, three positive pregnancy tests, and the couple telling their daughter Athalia about the results.



A post shared by Empress Schuck-Guingona (@itsempressita)

“This year, we would’ve been a family of four or even five. From two embryos, to one, then to none.

I’m still not sure how to talk about it,” Empress wrote in the post’s caption. “I just know that sometimes our plans for ourselves don’t align with God’s plans for us.”

The actress expressed her gratitude for Vito for “making sure she felt alright through this puzzling experience” and staying by her side, as well as to her whole family.

“We may not exactly understand how we feel about this but having each other is enough to say that everything will be ok,” Empress ended.

Among those who offered words of support and encouragement were Sue Ramirez, Jason Abalos, Melissa Ricks, Iya Villania and Chito Miranda.

Francine Diaz on balancing student-work life, creating good social media content

Francine Diaz is thankful to the people who have been helping her balance her work and studies as she aims to finish her senior high school this year.

The Kapamilya actress recently underscored the importance of education and shared how she personally manages her different priorities in life.

In a Bench event where she was introduced as their endorser, an Instagram photo and a video of her at the Southville International School were shown on screen with the caption, "Forever grateful for @sisfuph for always being there for me. We're excited for 2024."

She later explained, "When that photo was taken, nagmamadali ako sa school. I had to hurry because I had It's Your Lucky Day rehearsal for the first time. As an actress, we know naman na kapag busy schedule, ang hirap talaga magsiksik.

"So, for me, it's important that you know your priorities in life. No. 1, of

course, is God. Second is yourself and third is your career, including your studies. That's what I think. Hindi ko masyado napaglaanan ng mahabang oras. So on that day, I made it my first priority."

The 19-year-old is very grateful to people supporting her in juggling her work and school duties. "Even though I have a busy schedule at work, they help me and the team para makapag-aral and para makapag-tapos. And of course, my school also. I really appreciate them because they take good care of me aside from inaalalayan nila ako. Lagi rin nilang pina-prioritize yung mental health ko."

Asked what advice she could give to working students just like her, she replied, "You know what that question is really close to me. It's really challenging to

be working and studying at the same time. But I always say this dapat meron kang kahit isang bagay na pinanghahawakan, a reason for you to get up every day.

"Because when you have the one reason to wake up (and get up) every morning, yun ang magiging kakampi mo. It will be your guide for you to be successful or kung hindi man successful, para lang matapos din natin yung araw natin with a grateful heart." Francine was recently named as TikTok Philippines Celebrity Creator of the Year (2023). What makes good content, according to Francine, is to be authentic. "I always say this, you should know your viewers. Like for me, most of my audience are the younger ones, same age as mine, and sometimes titas and titos, lolo and lola so hindi naman ako

pwedeng gumawa ng content which they can't relate to.

"So, it's all about kung ano yung pwede nilang makuha sayo, yung makaka-relate sila in your your video content."

Francine believes that she attracts more followers by "being herself" and "not pretending" to be someone else.

"I think mas duon ko rin nakukuha somehow yung attention ng ibang tao or like mas duon ko nabibigyan ng paano ba... Ang isang bagay like, 'Ito OK siyang panoorin, OK siyang i-follow.' I think that's what I would say on how to be a good content creator — to be yourself."

And such a thought applies to everyone and not just to herself, she added. "I hope that we always wake up every day with a happy heart na hindi tayo nagpapanggap at hindi pini-pretend na masaya lang tayo. Because if you have genuine happiness on your side, it radiates and it's contagious. Nakakahawa siya."



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Yayo Aguila on ex-husband William Martinez: "Buhay niya, buhay ko, walang pakialaman."

Walang nakikitang dahilan si Yayo Aguila para mag-usap pa sila ng ex-husband na si William Martinez, maliban na lamang kung ito'y para sa kanilang mga anak.

Ito ang pahayag ni Yayo nang makapanayam siya ng entertainment press.

"Okay na rin na mag-remain kami na ganun—buhay niya, buhay ko, walang pakialaman. Pero pagdating sa mga bata, doon lang naman kami may reason para mag-usap," seryosong tugon ni Yayo.

Aminado si Yayo na hindi niya nagustuhan ang mga sinabi ni William laban sa kanya sa mga past interviews nito.

Matatandaang sinabi ni William noong 2021 sa panayam sa kanya ng veteran showbiz columnist na si Aster Amoyo na nagkaroon diumano ng "affair" si Yayo habang nakabakasyon ito sa Amerika.

Inulit ni William ang akusasyon niya kay Yayo sa kanyang recent interview para sa YouTube vlog ni Julius Babao.

Sa ngayon ay may kanya-kanyang partner sa sina Yayo at William.

Umabot din ng 25 years ang pagsasama nila bilang mag-asawa bago naghiwalay

nung 2010.

Kasama ni Yayo ang kanilang apat na anak na sina Patrizha, Danielle, Dana, at Adam.

Sabi ni Yayo, "Mabuti na rin yung hindi [kami nag-uusap]. Pero happy ako na merong nag-aalaga sa kanya.

"Happy ako na may nagpapasaya sa kanya para hindi niya ako binubwisit. Yung ganung istorya," natatawag sabi ni Yayo.

Dagdag ni Yayo, "Wala akong kailangan patunayan. Basta ang sa akin, kasama ko yung mga anak ko."

"Alam ni Lord yung totoo. Ang akin lang, accountability, di ba? Honesty, yun lang yun.

"So, hindi ko kailangan patunayan ang sarili ko. Wala akong kailangan sabihin. God knows who holds the truth, so doon

na lang ako. Gusto ko lang ng tahimik na buhay."

For her part, happy daw si Yayo sa piling ng kanyang non-showbiz boyfriend bagama't sinabi niyang wala na siyang balak mag-asawa.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHRISTMAS

For the first time ay hindi magpapasko sa bahay sina Yayo at ang kanyang mga anak.

"This time different naman yung approach namin. Kasi tradisyunal kami, e. This time we're not spending it at home, we're spending it outside the home para lang maiba," kuwento ni Yayo sa PEP.ph.

Ang mga anak daw ni Yayo ang nagplano ng kanilang staycation as a

family.

"Sinabihan lang ako two days ago, 'Ma, ito yung plano.'

"So sabi ko, 'Talaga?' 'Oo, kasi kami na nag-book.'

"So wala na akong ginagawa. Sabi lang niya, 'Presence mo lang tsaka roommate mo,' yung bunso ko raw.

"Kanya-kanya kaming kuwarto. Pero sila lahat nag-gasta so ang saya lang."

Paano naman kaya ilalarawan ni Yayo ang kanyang 2023?

"As always," sagot ni Yayo, "sasabihin ko blessed ako."

Natutuwa si Yayo dahil hindi siya nawawalan ng proyekto at agad napapalitan ng ibang proyekto sa oras na may teleserye siyang nagwawakas.

"Alam mo, ito ang daming movies, ang daming mga guestings na paisa-isa. Sabi nga ni Pie [Cherry Pie Picache] kanina, di ba? Sa aming mga aktor walang maliit o malaki na role. Basta you embrace what is given to you and then you perform and you deliver, sa amin malaking blessings na yun."



Faith Da Silva recounts long-awaited reunion with dad Dennis before Christmas

Christmas gifts come in different sizes and packaging. Some of them are delivered and received ahead of Christmas Day. However, the feelings of excitement and joy they bring to the recipient remain the same. They don't even diminish a bit.

Faith Da Silva, a GMA Sparkle Artist Center young actress and host, can attest to it, as she and her brother Silas were recently reunited with their dad - former matinee idol Dennis Da Silva. This particular Christmas gift to the siblings is a manna from heaven to be cherished for the rest of their lives.

"We were supposed to meet this first quarter of 2023 on my birthday. It was either for my birthday or his birthday," said Faith of the visit to her father, a person deprived of liberty, in a recent virtual interview with The STAR. She is April born, while Dennis is February born. "It didn't push through because of our schedules."

As shown on social media and online, the meet-up took place five days before Christmas. Her fellow TicktoClock host Kuya Kim Atienza played a part in it.

"Kuya Kim and my father have been friends. They had a conversation a few years ago. I didn't know how (that happened), or he (maybe) visited him. Ever since I've worked with Kuya Kim, matagal na po naming pinag-usapan yun (we've been talking about it for a long time)," recalled Faith.

"I'm just blessed that I've worked with Kuya Kim. It's a blessing that he is friends with (Police) Gen. (Gregorio) Catapang. I believe si God talaga yung gumagawa ng mga pamamaraan, siya talaga ang nag-ayos para matuloy ito (God found a way to make everything possible)."

She acknowledged with a grateful heart the goodness and kindness of these people and Him.

Asked what she was thinking on her way to Muntinlupa City Jail where her dad is, Faith said, "Siguro bilang artista kapag may mga eksena, pini-play mo siya sa utak mo (As an actress, most of the time, you have this thing of playing different scenes in your head like if you have work a day). It's my way to cope with the situation. I was trying to get myself ready for what might happen. But I knew I would be happy nonetheless."

The night before, Faith felt nervous and couldn't sleep.

"I tried, pero di ko kinaya, but my excitement (to meet him) was really there for me and Silas. Kabado, but at the same time, kalmado (I was nervous but calm). It was mixed emotions. I couldn't pinpoint (what those feelings were)."



Pure joy is all over their faces: Faith, brother Silas, and their dad Dennis Da Silva have a brief yet heartwarming reunion, allowing them to start anew and put the past behind them.

However, excitement was the dominant feeling, said she.

So, Faith and Silas were off to meet Dennis. The father and his children were given two hours to patch things up, start anew, as well as put the past behind them.

"I think I also needed to be with my brother. It was not easy, ang bigat siyempre sa loob, because imagine meeting someone for the first time, the first impression, (and the questions like) how will I introduce or open up myself to him? But everything became smooth. I became really emotional when I was able to hug him, iba pala talaga yung pagmamahal ng tatay (I've come to realize that a father's love is different)," said she.

The hug served as the introduction between Faith, Silas, and Dennis.

"He was happy and smiling," she said about her dad. "At first, we thought it (was going to be) awkward... dun ko nakita kung gaano kami magkatulad kasi madaldal din ako (The visit allowed me to see that we're similar in some way. I love to talk like him). I saw his effort to get to know the both of us, me and Silas."

"It was also hard for us to start the conversation, but he made an effort to start the conversation and to ask. Kapag merong silence for a while, tsika siya agad (If there was silence in between, he would quickly break it and talk)," added she.

The pictures they had from the visit were their first after many years.

Faith Da Silva, a GMA Sparkle Artist Center actress, wants to establish a parent-and-child relationship with father and former actor Dennis Da Silva after their recent meeting. It's another new beginning and chapter in the life of Faith and an early Christmas present she



will cherish for a long time.

"We didn't have pictures together," said Faith of having childhood photos with her dad. "He was actually able to take care of me between me and Silas. After Silas (was born), that's the time when they (my parents) separated. I had one year to be with him. My mom went to Japan for a few months after giving birth to me, nakasama ko siyang lumaki pero wala akong memory."

Faith was around two years old at that time. Her mom was supportive of the idea of Faith meeting her dad.

"She would encourage and tell us to visit him, and get to know him. Walang paninira na sinabi sa amin growing up (She didn't say anything negative about our father while we were growing up)," said she.

Back on what transpired during the conversations between the siblings and dad Dennis, Faith described it as "maha-habang pangungumusta (it's like a

long saying hello and hi even if we only had limited time)," and added that he supports Faith to finish her senior high school studies and is aware of her career in showbiz.

Faith could have even asked for details regarding the past, but she decided not to dwell on them.

"It was more of like acceptance (on my part that) you know you are my father. You are my parent, of course," said she, who also had the chance to know about her father's case and status. This allowed her to understand the plight of people deprived of liberty and their families.

"One of the biggest blessings I've received this year," shared she, "ay yung mga bagay na pinaghirapan ko, yung mga bagay na hindi ko mabibili ng pera (these are the things that I worked hard for and those that money can't buy)."

So, what's next after the pre-Christmas Day visit?

Faith answered that she wants to establish a parent-and-child relationship with Dennis and a good relationship with the latter's wife and kids.

In a separate question sent to Faith through Sparkle, she shared her thoughts by saying, "We needed that moment to make peace with ourselves. Of course, because of it, we've learned so much about him and how interconnected we really are because it showed me how similar we are in some ways and how grateful we are to have been given an opportunity to get to know who he really is."

"To me, the greatest blessing I've gotten from this situation would be to really open ourselves up to every possibility. I prayed for so long and so hard for this moment to come, but it is upon ourselves to take the course of action to make our dreams come true, and everything will fall through the divine timing," she concluded.

With that, it also takes faith and fate for something beautiful and meaningful to happen.

Jericho Rosales and Kim Jones exchange comments, jokes on IG amid persistent breakup rumors

Nagpapalitan ng mensahe at nakukuha pang magbiruan sa Instagram ng showbiz couple na sina Jericho Rosales at Kim Jones sa kabila ng mainit na usap-usapang hiwalay na umano sila.

Sa katunayan, nitong holiday season ay nag-iwan pa ang dalawa ng comments sa kani-kanilang Instagram posts.



JERICHO-KIM ALLEGED BREAKUP

Matapos ang Pasko, muling umingay ang usap-usapang hiwalay na sina Jericho at Kim dahil sa blind item ng entertainment columnist na si Ogie Diaz.

Tungkol ito sa "guwamong aktor" at "napakagandang babae" na inaayos na raw ang kanilang annulment, na sinimulan noon pa mang kasagsagan ng pandemya.

Tinukoy ang mag-asawa na wala pang anak. Nananatili rin daw silang magkai-bigan sa kabila ng desisyong maghiwalay.

Kasabay raw ng pag-aasikaso sa annulment nila ay inasikaso na rin ang kanilang conjugal properties.

Sinabi ng aktor na natatawa na lang siya sa opinyon ng ibang tao.

"All right, guys! I love you. Thank you," paiwas na sagot ng aktor hudyat ng pagtatapos ng interview.

Kasunod nito ay nagkaroon ng palitan ng comments sina Jericho at Kim kaya't muling namatay ang isyu. Pero muli na naman itong nabuhay noong nakaraang taon.

Ikinasal sina Jericho at Kim noong May 2014.

Ion Perez promises to love Vice Ganda "until 2090!"



Sa pagpasok ng Bagong Taong 2024, nangako si Ion Perez na mamahalin niya hanggang "2090" ang asawang si Vice Ganda.

Sa Instagram nitong nakaraang January 1, 2024, nag-post si Ion ng ilang videos nila ni Vice na kuha sa travels nila noong 2023.

Caption ni Ion, maha-haba raw ang itatagal ng kanilang pagmamahalan ni Vice na maaring tumagal hanggang "2090" 66 years mula ngayon.

Saad ni Ion, "Until 2090! MuhLOVE [heart emojis]"

"Welkam twenty twenty four!"

Komento ni Vice, nalamangan na naman siya ng partner. Goal daw niya ngayong taon ang matutong mag-edit para hindi siya maunahan lagi ni Ion sa pagpu-post.

Ayon kay Vice, "Waaaahhhhhh napakadaya!!! Nalamangan mo na naman ako! Ang goal ko this 2024 ay matuting magedit para di ka nakakalamang sa posting! Bwak bwak bwak!!!"

"I love you babe ko! This year will be an amazing one for us, our families, those we love and those who love us! Happy New Year asawa ko!"

What Cup of Joe says about their music journey: 'Parang up until now po hindi pa rin po kami sanay'

The current darlings of the Pinoy pop music scene, Cup of Joe, made a phenomenal entrance for 2023.

Starting their humble beginnings as students, the band consists of Gian Bernardino and Raphael Ridao as vocalists, keyboardist Xen Gareza, lead guitarist Gab Fernandez, bassist Sevil Severino, and guitarist CJ Fernandez are just getting started.

During their intimate media conference in Boteyju Restaurant at Estancia Mall on Dec. 13, the band shared that they are still overwhelmed by the audience's recognition.

"Parang up until now po hindi pa rin po kami sanay, parang it all feels like a dream pa rin, kapag may nagsasabi po sa amin yung kanta niyo ganito-ganyan, ang hirap pa rin po iaccept pero at the same time we're super thankful na we're given the opportunity," Raphael Ridao said.

(It's like up until now, we're still not used to it; it all still feels like a dream; when someone tells us your song is like this, it's still hard to accept, but at the same time, we're super thankful that we're given the



From left: Cup of Joe Gab Fernandez, Xen Gareza, Gian Bernardino, Sevil Severino and Raphael Ridao (Carissa Alcantara)

opportunity)

These talented 20-something musicians have reached

new heights with their infectious songs, led by their chart-topping single

"Tingin," featuring the soulful vocals of Janine, which has become their biggest hit to date.

Released early in the year, "Tingin" has resonated with a broad spectrum of listeners, captivating Gen Z and crossing over to millennials.

"Just like Raphael said, it is still a grasp for us kasi from a small audience, then ngayon po hindi lang buong pilipinas, umabot na rin po kami sa ibang bansa," Xen Gareza said.

(Just like Raphael said, it is still a grasp for us because it's from a small audience, and now it's not just the whole Philippines;

we've also reached other countries)

With only 13 songs on their streaming platforms, Cup Of Joe is more than just a one-hit wonder. The band took a leap of faith from the usual heartbreak songs by creating a positive vibe for love songs.

"Yung themes po kasi ng kanta namin siguro taliwas sa mga nauusong kanta ngayon, actually we took a risk making the themes of our song mostly about positive direction in love," Gian Bernardino said.

(The themes of our song are probably contrary to the trending songs today, actually, we took a risk making the themes of our song mostly about positive direction in love)

Under the care of Viva Records, the band is geared up for the next step of their career. One of their plans is to release a new single and a possible collaboration.

Also, part of their timeline of projects this year is a solo concert in the first half of 2024 that COJ has yet to confirm but has hinted at through various channels. The band did promise that details will be shared with eager fans soon.



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Vilma Santos-Recto: People are returning to movie theaters

Star for All Seasons Vilma Santos-Recto admitted she got emotional when she won Best Actress for the movie "When I Met You In Tokyo" during the 49th Metro Manila Film Festival Gabi ng Parangal held at the New Frontier in Araneta City last Dec. 27.

"Every award-giving body nakaka-excite. I'm still thankful na nakakakuha pa rin ako ng awards. Itong huli lang medyo naiyak ako. I got emotional kasi I didn't expect it. Walang kahina-hinala," said Vilma. (Every award-giving body is exciting. I'm still thankful that I'm still getting awards. I cried a little bit about this last one. I got emotional because I didn't expect it. There's no doubt.)

She added: "Sa totoo lang, yung adbokasiya kung bakit natin ginawa ito. It's not about the awards but people going back to the theater. I hope 'When I Met You In Tokyo' ay isa sa mga makaka-contribute na maibalik lang yung sigla ng industriya natin, yung mga dating walang kalamang laman yung sinehan. In fact nagsara na rin yung iba. Bumabalik na rin yung sigla. And for that, yun talaga ang advocacy namin ni Boyet. Sana yung 'When I Met You In Tokyo' kasama noong siyam na pelikula, maibalik natin yung sigla ng pelikulang Pilipino

and I think it's happening. This is going to be good for the industry."

Ate Vi, as she is fondly called, also prays for strong box office for "When I Met You In Tokyo" and the other official entries.

"We are expecting also on the box office para yung mga nag produce na bagong producers magkaroon sila ng chance paano kumita, para naman hindi sila madala. So that they can produce more. Para kung makapagproduce pa sila, mas maraming mabibigyan ng trabaho.

"So yun talaga ang adbokasiya ng pelikula namin. I am very humbled and I truly appreciate yung contribution ng character ko sa 'When I Met You In Tokyo' with the big help from the team led by Christopher De Leon.

"Sana magtuloy tuloy na manood ang mga tao dahil hanggang Jan. 7 pa ang When I Met You In Tokyo because it's a very simple love story. If you will watch it, mararamdaman ninyo kung gaano kalalim ang love at kung paano mag appreciate ng pagmamahal sa ibang tao. Yun ang theme namin. Very simple and you will appreciate love," she said.

Vilma, 70, said that she has



received so many awards that she has lost count of them all, but they are all important to her.

"Lahat ng awards na nakuha ko importante sa akin kasi yun ang resulta na I did a good job as an artist. Yun

ang sagot kaya I truly appreciate the prestige na nakukuha ko sa mga awards. Malaki ang naitulong nila sa career ko," she said.

"For almost 60 years now, palagay ko isa yan sa nagpatibay ng career ko. Meron ako sa office ko and meron din ako sa bahay na naka-display ng mga awards na natanggap ko from Urian, MMFF, PMPC, FAP, Famas, lahat ito naka-display. I thank God na may isa na naman akong trophy na idadagdag from MMFF."

For almost 60 years now, that is one of the things that strengthened my career. I have it in my office, and I also have at home on display the awards I received from Urian, MMFF, PMPC, FAP, and Famas, all of it's on display. I thank God that I have another trophy to add from MMFF.)

Atayde pushes bill to protect labor vs AI



Quezon City's first district Congressman Juan Carlos "Arjo" Maine Mendoza

Atayde said the presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be used to empower the productivity of Filipino workers all over the country – and not to replace them.

"Artificial intelligence (AI) should be used to enhance the productivity of workers—not replace them," Atayde, the author of the House Bill No. 9488 or the "Protection of Labor Against AI Automation Act," explained.

Atayde explained that AI "has the capacity to greatly enhance productivity and efficiency, thus ushering a new era marked by increased employment opportunities."

But the measure, he stressed, addresses fears that the use of AI will result in job losses.

"However, many fear that this technology poses threats to our labor force, as there are valid concerns that the use of AI will result in the displacement of human workers."

Under Section 5 of the proposed law, "the use of AI and automation technologies to replace human workers resulting in displacement, loss of securi-

ty of tenure, diminution of existing salaries, or benefits or unemployment is hereby prohibited unless an equivalent alternative employment opportunity for affected human workers are made available."

The measure further prohibits employers from using AI exclusively to hire, assess, and terminate employees.

Under the bill, "any use of AI or automated system during the said processes shall be directly supervised and complemented by human oversight."

While the bill seeks to prevent job losses as a result of the adoption of AI, Section 7 allows for the use of AI in industries or positions "where AI and automation technologies are deemed necessary for safety, efficiency, or the overall benefit of society" so long as appropriate measures are adopted to mitigate job displacement.

AI refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence. AI algorithms are designed to develop expert systems capable of making predictions or classifications using input data.

According to Atayde, a recent trip to the United States exposed him to the issues raised by Hollywood writers and artists who were concerned that the use of AI in the US film industry would result in job losses and reduced wages.

In September 2023, the Writers Guild of America ended their strike after it secured stringent guidelines for the use of AI in Hollywood.

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Are Pokwang and Eugene Domingo open to falling for a gay man?

Pokwang is always up for the challenge of coming up with new antics in every comedy project that she does, including

her 2023 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry *Becky and Badette* with Eugene Domingo.

In the comedy flick directed by Jun Robles Lana, she plays the titular role of Badette along with fellow comedienne Eugene as Becky. *Becky and Badette* is produced by The IdeaFirst Company and October Films.

Although having been around in the comedy scene for quite a while now, Pokwang said in a presscon that she would still challenge herself to do better in making people laugh.

"In every project that you do, palagi mong isipin na nacha-challenge ka for you to do better. Don't just depend on the director and script. It should always be new para (you still feel) na-excite ka na nangigigil ka para mas mapaganda. Even in the standup comedy shows that I do, I still feel nervous. I don't feel complacent na, 'Wala, mani-mani yan.' Kasi pag may gigil, napapaganda mo eh," informed Pokwang.

On the contrary, Eugene shared she didn't feel nervous while filming *Becky and Badette* as she put her trust on direkt Jun. "Especially when it's direkt Jun who wrote the script. Because direkt Jun covers it all — whether it's 'kanal' comedy, subtle,

slapstick, comedy na nag-iisip, comedy na masakit.

Direkt Jun noted that he found the "perfect tandem" in Eugene and Pokwang to play Becky and Badette.

The filmmaker had written a script a long time ago and he felt that Eugene and Pokwang were the best duo for the movie.

"It's really a collaboration," stated direkt Jun and added that he trusts his actors as much as they trusted him.

Eugene and Pokwang kick-started the promotions of *Becky and Badette* at the gay club O Bar Philippines. They personally requested that the promotions for the film should kick off there to reach out to the LGBTQIA+ community.

Are Eugene and Pokwang open to falling in love with a gay man?

Pokwang answered, "For me, when love hits you, talagang totoong pag-ibig na ibibigay sa'yo, you can't teach love. It's easy for you to say na, 'Hindi, ganyan ganyan (love)' but when it's there, wala eh. People go crazy when they are in love. We can't control love. And as I've said, it doesn't matter if gay or lesbian as long as 'they' will love me and my children."

"Ngayon ko lang narinig sa'yo yan, sis," reacted Eugene.

"Gender is not important now," stressed Pokwang. "What's more important is true and real love, one's personality and what's inside (their heart)."

As everyone knows, Eugene is happily married to Italian movie critic Danilo Bottoni but hypothetically speaking, would it be possible for her to have feelings for a gay man?

"I'm not saying we have the license no because I'm from theater we are exposed to everything. Me, as a person, I'm very passionate. I'm very open during the time when I was doing more of the theater. I don't know. Our orientation there parang try natin ang isa't isa. Like that. I will not keep this a secret from you (press people)," she said.

"Come, try natin ang isa't isa... It wasn't really love. It's just because you are young and you're very passionate. And then you have a lot of energy to try everything and then that was just it."

Eugene didn't regret it and she was very proud of it actually.

"There are so many gays now na talagang mai-in love ka sa kanila eh because they are cute and talented... So you can't blame (others) pero mapag-uusapan naman yun. It's really about preference, it's up to you."

Eugene admitted she was linked to direkt Andoy Ranay before but clarified, "Hindi naman talaga kami naging mag-jowa. Chika-chika lang."



It doesn't matter if gay or lesbian as long as 'they' will love me and my children.

Christopher de Leon says leaked Ronaldo Valdez crime scene shows police lapses

Veteran actor Christopher de Leon criticized the policemen who leaked the video of late actor Ronaldo Valdez's scene of the crime.

In his interview with Ogie Diaz, Christopher said that the viral video should not have been leaked in the first place.



"Ang naging problema, the next day, meron akong nakitang video. May video na kumalat na pinakita, hindi dapat pinapakita ng SOCO o kung sino man, 'yung kumuha, hindi dapat pinayagan," he said.

"Dapat 'yon for evidence, sa imbestigasyon. Tapos kayo, humahawak kayo ng kung anu-anong baril wala kayong suot suot na gloves, so nakita, nakita 'yung lapses ninyo. So dapat hindi niyo pinalabas 'yon,'" he added.

Christopher also described Ronaldo as his idol because of his acting style.

"We did Banaue. Siya 'yung kalaban ko sa end part. And I remember that he became my idol when I saw the scene: May kaek-sena siya, pansin mo kapag meron siyang kinoconfront nilalapi niya 'yung mukha," he said.

The Quezon City Police District (QCPD) has already fired the two policemen who uploaded the crime scene video.

In the video, Ronaldo was seen sitting in a chair with gunshot wounds in his unit in Casa Nueva Homes, Manga Street, New Manila, Quezon City.

Valdez had gunshot wounds in his right and left temple and was holding a gun in one hand when his driver Angelito Oclarit found his body.

Rob Gomez issues statement over unauthorized postings on his Instagram account

Nagahayag si Rob Gomez sa unauthorized post na inilagay ng kanyang estranged girlfriend na si Shaila Rebortera sa Instagram account ng aktor.



Lumikha ng malaking kontrobersiya ang mga unauthorized posting nito dahil idinamay pati sina Herlene at Bianca.

Pahayag ni Rob tungkol dito: "Please be advised that my phone was taken and used it without my consent on December 20, 2023 from 12:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lumaki na ang hidwaan sa pagitan nina Rob at Shaila na gumumpisa nang sabihin ng aktor sa guesting nito sa Fast Talk with Boy Abunda noong Agosto 3, 2023, na single siya.

Hindi nagustuhan ni Shaila ang salita na binitawan ni Rob sa national television dahil nagsama na sila noon at may isa nang anak.

Gamit ang social media, ibinulgar ng ex-beauty ang tunay na estado at relasyon nila ng kanyang live-in partner.

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TVJ files injunction vs TAPE, hopes to use 'Eat Bulaga' by January

The hosting trio of Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto, and Joey de Leon — collectively known as TVJ — has filed an injunction

against Television and Production Exponents

Inc. (TAPE) in an effort to prevent the latter from using the "Eat Bulaga" name.

The move follows the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) canceling the trademark registration of TAPE over the "Eat Bulaga" name, finding TVJ as the originators of "Eat Bulaga."

TVJ's legal representative Atty. Enrique "Buko" Dela Cruz reiterated that TVJ could have used "Eat Bulaga" for their current noontime show on TV5 — where they moved after departing TAPE earlier this year — before the IPO's decision, but opted not to, to avoid any trouble and respect the legal process.

Dela Cruz noted that there is still an appeal process that could go all the way to the Supreme Court, but doubled down on hopes that TAPE will respect the IPO's decision and not use the "Eat Bulaga" name in the meantime.

"Hindi ba dapat habang umaapela ka, galangin mo ang desisyon na binigay?" the lawyer said. "Na-anticipate namin 'yan,

inasahan namin na 'di nila re-respetuhin, kasi ang res-

peto ay isang salita na 'di kayang ibigay ng taong walang galang sa kapwa."

As a result, TVJ filed an injunction at the Marikina Regional Trial Court asking to prevent TAPE from using the "Eat Bulaga" name, the decision of which may come out next month.

If the court favors TVJ for the injunctin, the trio can use "Eat Bulaga" rather than "E.A.T." for their current noontime show.

TAPE's legal counsel Atty. Maggie Abraham-Garduque admitted to seeing Dela Cruz's interview and acknowledged her fellow lawyer for noting there is still an appeal process.

But in a reversal, Abraham-Garduque expressed her hopes TVJ would respect TAPE's right to appeal and not use the "Eat Bulaga" name yet, even admitting being concerned and bothered about the injunction which TAPE has yet to receive.

"Sinabi niya na ito ang hinihintay niya para magamit na nila ang 'Eat Bulaga' sa January,"

Abraham-Garduque said. "He is putting RTC Marikina in a compromising situation na parang alam na niya ang decision ng court."

TVJ continues to use "E.A.T." for their show, though during the theme song's chorus, they now belt out "E.A.T. ... Bulaga!"

Nora Aunor sings again in 'Pieta' over a decade after damaging vocal chords

Fans will be delighted to know that "Superstar" Nora Aunor will be singing once again in the upcoming film "Pieta."

In the film's special screening to several media representatives last week, Nora was seen singing the Kapampangan folk song "Atin Cu Pung Singsing."

The actress was under the weather during the screening and was not in attendance.

Director Adolf Alix Jr. said that Nora insisted to sing in the film because of the importance of the scene where the song takes place.

"Natuwa rin kami dahil first time niya ulit kumanta sa isang pelikula after so many years," Adolf said.

When asked if Nora is ready for a concert, the director said: "Ah, depende po yata. Hindi ko po masagot. Siya po ang tanungin ninyo."

"Pero para po

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dito, alam ko, medyo hirap siya. Pero dahil alam niya 'yung importansya nu'ng kanta du'n sa role niya, pinilit niya po na gawin," Adolf added. "Kahit 'yun, nakita niyo in between, kung medyo ano... sabi ko, 'Sige, okay lang,' basta 'yung essence naman ng gagawin, nan-

du'n." It can be

recalled that the "Superstar" underwent a cosmetic surgery last 2010 that allegedly damaged her vocal cords.

Produced by and starring Alfred Vargas, "Pieta" sees the actor and Nora accompanied by Gina Alajar, Angeli Bayani, Elora Espano, Tommy Alejandrino, Tabs Sumulong, Jaclyn Jose, Bembol Roco, Ina Raymundo, Alan Paule, Carlos Dala, Erlinda Villalobos and

Miggy Jimenez. "Pieta" is set for a Philippine theatrical release sometime in 2024.

Angel Foundation for Learning and TCDSB Launch Filipino Education Student Bursary By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

The Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) jointly launched a new bursary award for Filipino education students in Toronto. In a special gathering at the Catholic Education Centre (CEC), AFL and TCDSB officially announced the "Proudly Pinoy Student Bursary Project". The Angel Foundation for Learning has offered the Student Bursary Award in support of Filipino youth in collaboration with the TCDSB Filipino Advisory Committee (FAC) and the Filipino community.

The Angel Foundation for Learning, incorporated on April 23, 1987, is a charitable organization that serves the needs of students in the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). The AFL-TCDSB-Filipino ACommunity bursary is "part of an ongoing strategy to address 1) a strong

need for culturally responsive and reflective pedagogy that affirms students in the Filipino community, 2) increasing educator representation for more than 30% of Filipino students comprising the board, and 3) encouraging these students to pursue education as a career to ensure a broad base of educators of Filipino descent." The following are the details and guidelines:

Bursary Description. Two (2) bursaries of \$3,750 each shall be available to two graduating Filipino students who are registered students in the Toronto Catholic District School Board and require financial assistance to pursue post-secondary studies in education at a college or university and have made outstanding contributions to their school community. The bursary funds

will be administered through the Angel Foundation for Learning and co-sponsored with the TCDSB Filipino Advisory Committee and the Filipino community to help defray the cost of post-secondary education.

A. Criteria. The selection of the successful candidate will be based on the following criteria: 1) self-identify as a Filipino student. 2) a permanent resident or citizen of Canada; 3) a demonstration of academic proficiency, and potential for post-secondary success; 4) evidence of contribution to the school and the community; 5) a description of financial need and/or personal challenges; 6) confirmation/evidence of acceptance into a post-secondary institution in the field of

education; and 7) is not a dependent of an AFL employee.

B. Application Process. An application must be completed with all of the following criteria for consideration of this bursary: 1) completed and signed the application form; 2) a personal cover letter, which outlines contributions to the school and community; states the nature of the financial need; 3) reason why pursuing education as a career, includes as much detail as appropriate; 4) two letters of recommendation from the following: the school principal or designate, employer, coach, department head, chaplain, support staff, teacher, community leader; the letter should outline contributions to the school and community, and state the nature of

the financial need; and 4) confirmation/evidence of acceptance into a post-secondary institution.

C. Funding Source: The Total Bursary/Award for three years is \$22,500, broken down to \$ 7,500 each year from 2024 to 2026. year. The proposed sources of funding are from 1) The Filipino Community (\$7,500); 2) AFL Donations and Restricted Fund Investments (\$7,500); and 3) TCDSB Match Up through Equity.

E. Contact Person and Deadline. Interested applicants should Email the completed application package to Emmy Szekeres Milne at emmy.szekeresmilne@tcdsb.org. or Mail to The Angel Foundation for Learning, CEC, 80 Sheppard Ave. East, Toronto, ON, M2N 6E8. Application Deadline is Friday, April 21, 2024. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Welcome 2024 with Optimism

OPTIMISM from page 1

"As we welcome 2024 with great optimism, I call upon every Filipino from every corner of

the world to contribute to the future of our beloved motherland. Let us embody the spirit



of solidarity through acts of kindness, volunteerism, and compassion,

knowing that each of us is a catalyst for our country's meaningful social transformation," said Marcos in his New Year message.

The President said that he was delighted to begin the New Year.

"Let the dream of a revitalized Philippines—a Bagong Pilipinas—guide our every endeavor as we bring forth peace, progress, and prosperity for all," said Marcos.

Marian Rivera already a 'graduate' in jealousy; wishes to delete bad search history

For Marian Rivera, it is better to focus on the good things than to dwell on the bad things, and among those she said she has learned to do away with as she matured was jealousy.

The actress and her husband, actor Dingdong Dantes were the latest guests on showbiz columnist and vlogger Ogie Diaz's YouTube entertainment show.

The married couple got candid as they shared parenting tips and how they are as husband and wife on Ogie's vlog uploaded yesterday.

One of the questions Diaz asked was if Marian had already "graduated" from getting jealous.

"Parang oo. Simula noong nagka-dalawang anak ako, parang sabi ko nga, minsan nga napag-uusapan namin (Dingdong), 'Ano ba yan, nyemas. Bakit ko ba ginawa 'yan?' 'Yung mga ganong factor. Natatawa na lang ako sa sarili ko 'pag binabalikan ko,'" Marian admitted while looking at Dingdong who was seated beside her

on the couch.

She added, "Sabi ko, 'Oh my God. Eto talaga 'yung mga kabataan talaga. Sabi ko, 'Dad (Dingdong), ano ba itong ginawa ko Pinagtatawanan talaga namin."

'Delete lahat 'yan'

Marian explained that she has learned and grown so much ever since she became a mother. She and Dingdong are parents to Zia, 8, and Ziggy, 4.

"Parang 'yung sa motherhood ko, ang laki nu'ng binigay sa akin na pagbabago ng Panginoon talaga. Ang dami kong dapat i-focus, bakit 'yan? Huwag naman. Ito na lang, pamilya ko," she said.

She quipped about those who were once like



her and said there will come a time when they will look back at their past mistakes and wish they had done differently.

Ogie was not able to help but quip,

"Alam mo, 'yung mga ginawa mo noong araw, history yan."

Marian laughed and said, "Pwede bang burahin na natin? Nakakahiya."

Ogie remarked that it cannot be undone or unseen on online search sites, which led to all of them laughing.

"Pa-delete lahat 'yan," Marian immediately replied.

She then turned serious to talk about committing mistakes and

learning from them.

Ogie commented that Marian had improved a lot.

"Ang laki na nang pinagbago ni Marian. Hindi na siya masyadong mataray," said the showbiz columnist.

It drew laughs from Marian, and she again reiterated that it was because motherhood had changed her.

"Minsan nga nagkwe-kwentuhan kami ng mga kaibigan ko. Alam mo nakakaubos ng energy kung magpo-focus ka sa hinding magandang bagay. Ang daming magandang bagay na pwede mong i-focus. Etong hindi okay, ba't mo pagtutuunan ng pansin. Binigay na nga lahat ni Lord sa'yo, ito pa rin ang titingnan mo?" Marian said.

There were past issues that alleged that Marian was jealous with several actresses who were linked or worked with Dingdong.

'We will always love each other': Cherry Pie Picache confirms breakup with Edu Manzano

Veteran actress Cherry Pie Picache confirmed that she and Edu Manzano have broken up.

In an interview with the media on the sidelines of the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry "Firefly," a reporter asked Cherry Pie how her heart is.

"Hindi ba sa edad kong ito ngayon, I cannot depend my happiness anymore on somebody else, hindi ba? Besides dapat din ay buo ako or whatever or kumpleto ako kung magmamahal ako — ulit," she

said.

"We are very good friends, he is a very good person. We are very good friends. We will always love each other, so 'yon.I think we are okay naman. I think we will always love each other and 'yun nga we are friends, we are good friends," she added.

Cherry Pie also said that she is open to falling in love with someone again.



"Pero habang wala, eh di masaya ka sa sa sarili mo. Lalo na after nu'ng pandemic, hindi ba 'yung self love? 'Yung hindi mo na pwedeng iasa 'yung kaligayahan mo o kabuluhan mo sa ibang tao. Nasa sa iyo," she said.

"And ako personally I can't complain. God has been blessing me so much. Tapos tayo as tayo, 'yung magmahalan lang,

magtulungan na lang, hindi ba? We've learned so much from the pandemic. So ngayon may partner o wala, ayan na, may partner o wala, okay lang, hindi ba? Let's be grateful for everyday," she added.

Cherry Pie and Edu rekindled their love after two decades when they joined the ABS-CBN teleserye "Marry Me, Marry You."

They admitted their relationship in December 2021.

Rob Gomez shares baptism photos of daughter amid scandal

Rob Gomez shared photos of his daughter Amelia's baptismal ceremony together with his partner Shaila Rebortera amid allegations of cheating against him following the leak of his text conversations with his "Magandang Dilag" co-stars.

Gomez is at the center of controversy after screenshots of his message exchanges with Herlene Budol and Bianca Manalo, hinting at a sexual relationship, were leaked on social media last week. Manalo and Budol have denied any romantic involvement with him, while the actor merely claimed that he had no access to his phone, apparently alluding to his hacked messages.

The baptism, which apparently took place last Dec. 17, was attended by Gomez and Rebortera's families, as seen in the photos taken by photographer Jebe Gonzalez.

"I love you 3000. Thank you God for this day. 12.17.23," Gomez's caption read, which seemed to be a throwback



(From left) Rob Gomez, Shaila Rebortera. Images: Jebe Gonzalez via Instagram/@robgoomez.23

post uploaded on Christmas Day.

The comments section of Gomez's post is turned off, as of this writing.

The Kapuso star seemingly regained access to his social media platforms last Dec. 22 after he flaunted his abs in topless photos on Instagram. He previously claimed that he had no access to his phone after his alleged conversations with Budol and Manalo went viral.

Following the controversy, Budol and Manalo firmly denied the allegations on their respective social media platforms, with the latter claiming that parts of her conversations with Gomez were intentionally deleted to "create malicious insinuations."

Candid SPOOF (Pop-ups are not supposed to be taken seriously - EDITOR)



Nitz Rejdik is happy with the high turnout of 300 attendees at Sanib Saya. This year, she hopes to be able to give away 300 bags of rice for the needy from 100 last December.

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Sanib Saya Toronto Brings Christmas Holiday Cheers

SANIB page 23
sphere “en gusto” with

an entertaining program,
special dance numbers, and

extra food-free takeaways.
The occasion was certainly
a great Sunday of giving,
sharing, fellowship, “pasa-

salamat”, and above all, an
enjoyable holiday celebra-
tion. (Tony A. San Juan,
OCT)



1, JDL performers entertain the guests; 2, Ryan Orlanda poses with JDL students; 3, FCT Vice President Theresa Lumanlan happily tells OMNI News that they've helped more people in this year's Sanib Saya; 4, Agnes Miranda is interviewed by OMNI News as the Sanib Saya founders stand behind her; 5, Jackie Cristini and Frank Cruzet; 6, Agnes Miranda, Tony San Juan, Frank Cruzet and Danny Orbillo (SEATED) catch up on the latest community news; 7, Nitz Rejdik



“Next year, we'll try to give 300 bags of rice” Nitz Rejdik

Daniel Padilla trying to win back Kathryn Bernardo

Veteran showbiz columnist Cristy Fermin claimed that Daniel Padilla is trying to win back Kathryn Bernardo.

In “Showbiz Now Na” YouTube channel, Cristy said that Daniel is talking with their common friends to help him win back Kathryn.

“Ito palang si Daniel Padilla nakikiusap sa kanilang common friends. Hindi na po namin iisa-isahin kung sino-sino 'yung mga ka-tropa nila,” Cristy said.

“Nilalapitan ni Daniel Padilla para pakiusapan, baka ma-win back pa niya si Kathryn,” she added.



Cristy, however, believed that Daniel and Kathryn's common friends will not help Daniel.

“Ako palagay ko pakikilingan siya o magpapahiram ng tenga ang mga kaibigan pero hindi aakto o aaksyon para sa kanilang pagbabalikan,” she said.

“Kasi kaya nga magkakaibigan kayo e. Alam nila ang tunay na nangyari,” she added.

Kathryn and Daniel attended the Asia Artist Awards 2023 held in Philippine Arena in Bulacan recently.

They were both awarded the Fabulous Award, alongside Korean stars NewJeans, Stray Kids and Lim Young-woong.

It was their second public appearance after announcing their breakup. Their first public appearance was during the ABS-CBN Christmas special.

Sarah Lahbati shows off beach body anew; dad calls out ‘barking dogs’ amid split rumors with Richard Gutierrez

Kapuso artist Sarah Lahbati recently showed off her beach body as rumors of her break-up with husband Richard Gutierrez continue to spread.

Sarah recently posted on her Instagram account a Reel of herself walking on a beach, with cloudy skies and peaceful waters behind her, set to Lana del Rey's “Sad Girl.”

“Stretch marks and all,” Sarah wrote in the caption, pointing out the pregnancy marks she has after giving birth to sons Zion and Kai.

The video comes as speculations that Sarah and Richard have broken up were fuelled even more by the comments of each other's parents.

A number of fellow celebrities

praised Sarah in the comments section including Ellen Adarna, Chie Filomeno, Maggie Wilson, Katarina Rodriguez and Isabel Oli-Prats.

Sarah's father Abdel recently posted on his own Instagram account a photo of his family, including Sarah, and wrote in the caption “Enjoying every moment with family. The convoy keeps going and don't mind dogs barking.”

Fans have speculated that among the “dogs” Abdel was referring to was Richard's mother and fellow actress Annabelle Rama, who over the weekend had thoughts of her own regarding the alleged split.

Last December 7, Annabelle said that Richard, Zion, and Kai had been living with her for a month now though a few days later doubled down on wishing Richard and Sarah would not part ways out of concern for her grandchildren.



‘I'll see you around petunia’: Xian Lim pens message for Kim Chiu after breakup

Just minutes after Kim Chiu urday evening, Xian Lim penned confirmed their breakup Sat-

Calling her “dearest Kim,” Xian said he was thankful for the 12 long years they had together.

“The 12 years of my life with you was the best gift I could ever ask for. We have expressed our love for each other to the fullest and knowing that I got to share those moment with you, knowing our hearts beat as one at one

point in our lives is truly something I will cherish for life,” Xian wrote.

Unlike Kim whose accompanying photos were in black-and-white, Xian's photos consist of only one black-and white snap while the rest were not.

“Like all good things, it must eventually come

to an end. I am grateful for all the moments we shared together. Thank you for all the unconditional love throughout the years. My respect and admiration for you as a person, as an artist, and as some one I spent more than a decade with will always remain,” he added.

Xian said that he wishes for Kim to find all the happiness

and love she is searching for, adding that she deserves nothing but the best.

“No goodbyes here, i'll see you around petunia,” Xian ended his post that tagged Kim.

Prior to the ex-couple's admission, rumors were rife that they had already separated.

Among the events that fueled it was when Xian's YouTube channel were only left with a few videos and their videos together were no longer seen on his channel.



Hayley Yarra

Kaitlin Panganiban



Nathalie



Christmas tree competition

MARKY HUGH CHRISTMAS PARTY

KIM CHIU from page 1

to appreciate our honesty and give us the privacy we need as we begin new chapters of our lives. To all our supporters, maraming salamat for all the love and understanding.

Lastly, to Xi, Thank you for the almost 12 years of beautiful memories

together one can never imagine. You will always have a place in my heart. Thank you for showing me what love is.

As we close this chapter of our lives, I am asking for everyone's kindness and respect. I hope this clears everything as we all move forward with our lives.





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'I love you 3000': Rob Gomez, Shaila Rebortera celebrate baby's baptism amid 'convo' scandal

The daughter of controversial Kapuso actor Rob Gomez and his partner Shaila Rebortera was baptized recently.

In his Instagram account, Rob shared photos of the baptism.

"I love you 3000. Thank you, God, for this day," he captioned the post.

Rob recently made headlines after his alleged private conversations with his



"Magandang Dilag" co-stars Herlene Budol and Bianca Manalo were allegedly leaked online.

Rob's Facebook account posted the leaked screenshots but later deleted it. Social media users, however, saved the screenshots, which began spreading like wildfire online.

In a statement sent to Pep.ph, Rob said Shaila obtained his cellphone without his consent. "Please be advised that my phone was taken and used it without my consent on December 20, 2023 from 12:30 a.m. to 4 p.m."

He said that the person "posted pictures [on] social media account pretending that

I posted it with the intention of destroying my reputation."

Herlene and Bianca, meanwhile denied any romantic ties with Rob.

EXCLUSIVE: Zeinab Harake on vlogging her life: 'Minsan nakaka-frustrate din naman'

'Kampon' actress and YouTuber Zeinab Harake shares what her number one priority is for the new year.

After making her movie debut in the 2023 Metro Manila Film Festival horror film entry Kampon, vlogger Zeinab Harake said she really prepared for her big screen moments with lead actor Derek Ramsay.

"Nag-workshop ako. Almost ilang months din naming pinaghandaan yung emosyon ko, kung paano ako makakatalon sa character na gagawin ko and lahat naman yun naging okay. Yung mga anak ko, actually ngayon wala pa naman silang magiging reaction kasi bata pa and siyempre bawal sa bata yung pelikula. Kaya naman kung magkakaroon sila ng reaction sa movie. Siguro pag malalaki na sila nun. But alam ko magiging proud sila kasi naging professional talaga ako kung paano ko gawin kada eksena," she told PUSH in an exclusive interview.

After her breakup with rapper Skusta Clee last year, Zeinab said she is in a very happy relationship with current boyfriend, basketball player Bobby Ray Parks. The 25-year-old YouTuber said she will never get used to the fact that her love life is for public consumption.

"Actually nakakatakot eh. Paano pag nag-away kayo 'di ba? Kasama ang sam-bayanan. Pero hindi naman na ganun nangyayari sa love life ko ngayon. Talagang more on maturity, understanding sa

career namin both sides, and ang pinakamaganda dun yung pagiging supportive namin sa isa't isa. Wala na akong masasabi or mahihiling pa," she said.

For the holidays, Zeinab shared that she has no plans to stop vlogging and looks forward to documenting more memories for herself and her fans.

"Actually wala na akong ibang ginawa kasi kahit Pasko nag-ba-vlog ako and camera dito, camera doon pero hindi naman siya actually working kasi na-e-enjoy ko naman talaga yan kahit Christmas season and every New Year's Eve and ni-lu-look forward ko lang talaga yung taon-taong magandang memories kasama yung mga anak ko kasi yun yung pinakamasarap balikan taon-taon," she explained.

Sometimes, the Kampon actress said she wishes she could have a day with no cameras following her.

"Minsan naman may ganun din akong moments na kailangan mong huminga. And minsan nakaka-frustrate din naman na camera everywhere. Pero, nasa 'yo nga yun kung paano mo dadalhin, kung paano mo iti-take yung energy and all. Pero ako, lagi kong sinasabi na kada project or may camera na nandiyan, sobrang saya ma-acknowledge yung kilala ka or kausapin ka. Sobrang blessing na siya na hindi lahat naman ng tao may ganung power kaya hindi para kainisan yun," she shared.

For the new year, Zeinab revealed what she wants to prioritize in 2024.

"Siguro number one yung mental health ko (laughs), yung wala ng worries. Kasi overthinker talaga ako eh and sa pag-o-overthink ko minsan, natatakot ako lumabas, ayoko mag-tuloy tuloy siya. Kaya ang ni-lu-look forward ko talaga

yung health ko, relationship ko sa mga anak ko, pagpapatuloy pa rin yung pagiging lovable mom ko and mga anak ko sa akin and yung mga school nila, and kung paano ako pag mag-po-provide sa ibang tao," she added.

'A Very Good Girl' tops Netflix film rankings in different countries

'A Very Good Girl' wins with audiences worldwide on Netflix.

Kathryn Bernardo and Dolly De Leon's A Very Good Girl is slaying its way to the top on streaming giant Netflix after its release on Wednesday, December 27.

The much-anticipated film of Seoul International Drama Awards awardee Kathryn and Golden Globe nominee Dolly is mothering the holiday season as it ranks number 1 on Netflix Philippines, Netflix Qatar, and Netflix United Arab Emirates.

The film also reached the no. slot 2 in Bahrain and Hong Kong as well as the 4th spot in Singapore, as of this writing.

It has also been a trending topic on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) after netizens posted their review and thoughts after watching the film.

"#AVeryGoodGirl was indeed a very good film! It was not just entertaining, it was also an eye-opening masterpiece addressing social issues. A one of a kind movie that pioneered unconventional cinematic lens with the aim of changing the landscape of Philippine cinema," a netizen wrote.



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Philippines remains a pageant powerhouse



Michelle Dee puts the Philippines back on track at the Miss Universe stage

A recap of triumphs in major pageants in 2023

A happy and prosperous New Year to all. Looking back, the Philippines remained a powerhouse country in global beauty competitions, earning good results in major international pageants the past year.

The year's top story belongs to Michelle Dee's Top 10 placement in the 72nd Miss Universe, held in El Salvador in No-

vember, which marked the country's return as a semi-finalist in the world's most popular pageant.

Dee rocked the Miss Universe finals with show-stopping performance in swimsuit and evening gown competitions but failed to advance in the Top 5. Nevertheless, Dee made history as the candidate with multiple special awards at Miss Universe, to wit, Voice for Change Gold Award

(for her advocacy on autism awareness), Fan Vote, Best National Costume, and Spirit of Carnival (given by pageant sponsor Carnival Cruise).

The other big story was Pauline Amelinckx, who almost walked away with the Miss Supranational 2023 crown, placing first runner-up to Andrea Aguilera of Ecuador, held in Malopolska, Poland in July. It was the country's high-

est placement since Mutya Datul won the crown in 2013. Amelinckx won the Supra Chat Challenge award.

Bb. Pilipinas Nicole Borromeo also made the country proud finishing a respectable 3rd runner-up in Miss International 2023, held in Tokyo, Japan in October. It was the first placement for the country, which had collected one 1st runner-up, two 2nd runners-up, and one 4th runner-up, since 1960. Andrea Rubio of Venezuela won a record 9th Miss International title.

The first quarter of the year saw Maria Luisa Varela winning the Miss Planet International 2023 crown, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in January.

Miss Universe Philippines 2022 finalist Annabelle McDonnell nearly won the inaugural Miss Charm 2023, held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in February, finishing first runner-up to Luma Russo of Brazil.

Then, Ashley Subijano Montenegro made it to the Top 21 of Miss Eco International 2023, won by Nguyen Thanh Ha of Vietnam, held in Cairo, Egypt in March.

Mutya ng Pilipinas beauty Shannon Robinson won Miss Environment International 2023 in Mumbai, India on June 15.

In November, Bb. Pilipinas Anna Lakrini did well ending up 2nd runner-up in Miss Globe 2023, held in Tirana, Albania. Aanavi Kher of Malaysia won the crown.

Mutya ng Pilipinas Tourism International 2022 Jeanette Reyes took home the Miss Tourism Metropolitan International 2023/24 in Miss Tourism International 2023/24, held in Sabah, Malaysia, won by Tia Li Tavepanichpan, also of Thailand. Reyes also bagged the subsidiary title of Miss Southeast Asia Tourism Ambassador 2023/2024.

Elda Louise Aznar nearly made it back-



Pauline Amelinckx places first runner-up at the Miss Supranational 2023

to-back in Miss CosmoWorld 2023, finishing as 1st runner-up to USA's Shelby Ann Howell, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Philippines' Meiji Cruz relinquished her crown.

In December, Mutya ng Pilipinas 2022 Iona Violeta Gibbs was named in the Top 22

in Miss Intercontinental 2023, held in Sharm-El Sheikh, Egypt, won by Chatralin Chotjirawarachat of Thailand.

Closing the year was Yllana Marie Aduana, who almost became the country's 5th Miss Earth, finishing second to winner Drita Ziri of Albania. Aduana took the title of Miss Earth Air 2023 in the 23rd edition of the pageant, held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

In pageants for married women, Meranie Gadiana Rahman, a Filipina representing Hawaii, USA, won the 46th Mrs. Universe title, held in Okada Manila, while Eimee Edralin-Cragun was crowned Elite Mrs. Universe Official 2023, a different pageant, held at Newport World Resorts, Pasay City, both in October.

For the males, Robert Douglas Walcher IV, son of former actress Patricia Javier, brought home the Mister Teen International 2023 title, held in Bangkok, Thailand in June.

James Reggie Vidal was named 2nd runner-up in Man of the World 2023, won by Jin Wook Kim of Korea, held at Samsung Performing Arts Theater in Makati City in June.

Misters of Filipinas RJ De Vera achieved a rare back-to-back victory in Man Hot Star International 2023, succeeding fellow countryman Jovy Bequillo, held in Chon Buri, Thailand in November.

Others were Johannes Rissler made the Top 25 in Mister Supranational 2023, won by Iván Álvarez of Spain, held in Nowy Sacz, Poland in July; Jefferson Bunnery who finished in the Top 10 in Mister International 2023, won by Kim Thitisan Goodburn of Thailand, held in Bangkok, Thailand in September; and Ivan Ignacio named 2nd runner-up in 1st Mister Cosmopolitan 2023, won by USA's Blake Johnston, held in Malaysia in October.



RJ De Vera secures a back-to-back win at Man Hot Star International 2023

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No time for romance, Alden Richards prioritizes career



Alden prioritizes his family in every life choice he makes

According to Alden Richards, he is very excited about the projects he will do under his own company Myriad Corporations in 2024.

"I have lots to do next year. I will have concerts here and abroad. I'm also scheduled to do an international movie to be shot in New York. It's under a foreign production," he revealed.

"The movie is part of a trilogy. It is an advocacy film. It highlights women empowerment and women's rights. With these, my schedule for 2024 is full," Alden went on.

With this scenario, how can he possibly face his love life?

"Honestly, I'm not the type who can juggle between my love life and showbiz career. At present, I can't afford to have a girlfriend considering my hectic schedule.

When the time comes though that I'll fall in love, I will lie low in the scene."

Why is it so?

"It's not easy to balance your professional and personal life. For example, if I have a partner, it's unfair to the girl if I don't have quality time for her. If I come to the point that I like to settle down already, I should be prepared to leave my work," he explained.

Alden emphasizes the importance of prioritizing family in his life choices, expressing a desire to be actively involved in witnessing and participating in his future children's formative years.

Drawing inspiration from other celebrities who temporarily step away from the spotlight upon settling down, he envisions a similar trajectory for himself—taking a hiatus and potentially returning to the entertainment industry once his family life is stable.

Regarding his future romantic partner, Alden remains open-minded, stating that he cannot definitively choose between someone from the entertainment field or a non-showbiz individual, preferring to let fate determine his ideal match.

"I can't say as of now. Come what may. You see, if I pick one from the 'biz, there will be conflict. There is something that will be compromised. So, I can't really choose. I will just wait for that right girl," ends Alden.

In an Instagram post, Megastar Sharon Cuneta urged netizens to stop linking her with ex-husband Gabby Concepcion after their successful concert Dear Heart.

She clarified that their relationship is strictly professional. Sharon emphasized that they hadn't been in touch since the concert, living separate lives due to significant differences. She expressed gratitude

for their fans but hinted that the Dear Heart concerts might be their last collaboration.

"Ooooookay everyone. Please 'listen.' I understand that so very many of you Sharon-Gabby fans are thinking, or hoping that we are 'back together' in some way or another. Reality check: We have not been in touch since our last concert, we do not talk, text, or see each other. We are living totally separate lives and whatever has been going on in mine, he has absolutely nothing to do with, and vice-versa," he post said.

"I know that the concerts brought all of you back to happier times, but there IS a reason why we have not gotten back together since we broke up in 1987. He is my eldest daughter's Papa and so he will always be a part of my life and history – but that's about it. We just couldn't, cannot live together because we have very, very little in common," she carried on.

Sharon also pleaded with those spreading negativity to leave her children out of it, emphasizing their need for privacy.

Zaijian Jaranilla, Miggy Jimenez react to their viral kissing scene, raise sexual identity

After going viral for their kissing scene in the Senior High the endearing boys' love pairing of Zaijian Jaranilla and Miggy Jimenez, more fondly called Tim-Poch, shared that they are grateful for the positive feedback from viewers.

The young Kapamilya actors shared how the evolving love story of Tim (Zaijian) and Poch (Miggy) is contributing to positive awareness among viewers regarding developing feelings for someone of the same sex.

"It's heartwarming because people liked and embraced it. When we have scenes together, we often discuss how far we can go. Our communication is essential because the scenes we do are not taken lightly," shared Zaijian in an interview during the Forever Grateful: ABS-CBN Christmas Special 2023.

Zaijian also acknowledged his directors for helping him portray Tim, allowing viewers to connect with a character struggling to come to terms with his sexual identity.



Zaijian Jaranilla (left) and Miggy Jimenez in a scene from the hit series 'Senior High'

Miggy echoed similar sentiments, stating that his sweet moments with Zaijian's character came across very naturally on-screen.

"It's overwhelming, but at the same time, I don't want to let it get to my head. I don't want to ruin the chemistry we have. We didn't even plan it at all, so I want to treasure it. I have to be grateful," he said.

Zaijian and Miggy's unexpected love team in Senior High recently became a hot topic on social media as netizens praised the undeniable chemistry and relatability of their characters, shedding light on accepting one's sexual identity.

Atasha Muhlach: This year's 'It Girl' blazes on to 2024

Atasha Muhlach — daughter of celebrity power couple Charlene Gonzales and Aga Muhlach — has quickly become the latest sensation in the entertainment industry. She's got it all, as they say: beauty, brains, and undeniable charm.

The 22-year-old rose to stardom with a memorable debut at the prestigious Le Bal des Débutantes in November 2022. The annual event in Paris, known for featuring young women from notable families worldwide, set the stage for her entrance into the limelight.

But more than just a beautiful face, Muhlach is a woman of substance. To begin with, she graduated with honors and a Bachelor of Arts in Business from Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom last July.

Transitioning seamlessly from university life to the glitz and glam of showbiz, she officially signed as a talent under Viva Artist Agency not long after finishing college. Now dubbed the next-generation It Girl, Muhlach wasted no time making her presence felt, making her mark in fashion magazines, social media, and most recently on TV. In September, she took on a new role as

one of the newest Dabarkads on TVJ's noon-time show, "E.A.T." on TV5.

With her infectious energy and undeniable charm, Muhlach has earned praise from her co-hosts and the audience despite being a newbie in showbiz. And yet, with all these compliments, she remains humble, attributing her success to the welcoming environment provided by her colleagues, especially those on E.A.T.

"The Dabarkads made me feel at home, and they are so nice. I really can't begin to explain how nice they are to me. They make me feel like they're family — you eat and talk with them, and they really help you so much.



From Day 1, they made me feel as comfortable as possible, and I can't thank them enough for that. I'm so grateful to have started my journey with them," Muhlach said in an interview following her launch as the newest endorser of Jollibee and its Coffee Blends line.

She is especially grateful to comedian-host Jose Manalo for teaching her to speak better Filipino: "Because of Mayor Jose, I'm able to have Tagalog lessons. Being around the Dabarkads and working with them daily is a significant factor in why I'm learning a lot. I even converse with my father in Tagalog now."

With many noticing her jolly and hilarious personality when hosting, Muhlach quickly credits her father, Aga, again for passing on this trait to her.

"My dad and I are pretty much the same. I inherited my funny side from my dad, really. He always tells me, though, that I still have a lot to learn, but of course, it's normal, and I am willing to learn and make mistakes. I'm just really happy that people are really forgiving about them," admitted Muhlach.

"My parents always tell me that I shouldn't be scared and to always give it my best and put in the work. I am game to do anything, and I will always try my best to do everything I can to the best of my abilities and, more importantly, have fun. This is all new to me, after all," she added.

Keeping herself grounded along the way, too, Muhlach said, "With all this attention, I feel really grateful, but it doesn't really feel like [being a star]. Everything feels normal because I still have so much to learn. I need to go through a lot more. I'm just really grateful for what I'm doing now and where I'm at. I'm so excited for the future and what it holds for me on this journey."

Finally, when asked if there is a chance for her to go into pageantry just like her mom, who was crowned Miss Universe Philippines in 1994, she replied, "I'm not going to close my doors. I'm learning this process of being an artist first now. I want to develop those skills, but let's see where it goes."

Always one to acknowledge how she admires her mother, Muhlach said, "My mom is beautiful inside and out, and I really look up to my mother. She's someone that I really praise, but as [to pageantry], I don't know yet. We'll see; I just need to master my craft with hosting and then, eventually, acting, singing."

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