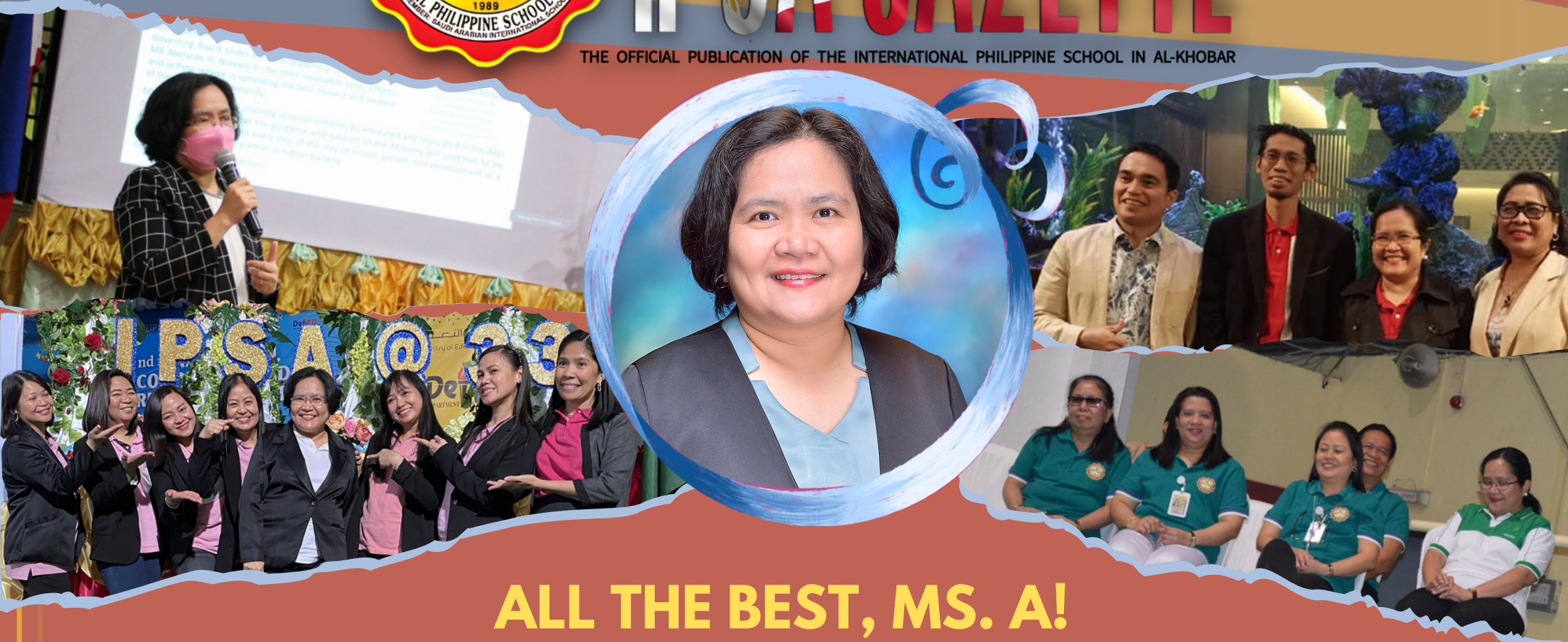




# IPSA GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINE SCHOOL IN AL-KHOBAR



## ALL THE BEST, MS. A!

by: Thyreign Asher C. Flores

The IPSA Gazette Editorial Staff wishes the best of luck to our School Principal, Mrs. Liezel Agtarap-Aguilar, whose resignation was formally announced to the Community through the 12th School Governing Board General Meeting Report on September 27, 2021.

The General Meeting Report stated that on October 2019, Ms. A, as IPSAns dearly called her, already submitted her intent to end her service with IPSA in 2020 in order to pursue further studies and other personal/professional goals. However, travel restrictions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessitated recalibration of teaching and learning in the new normal made her extend her service until the end of S.Y. 2021-2022.

**LET THE RECORDS SHOW:** Mrs. Liezel A. Aguilar was not just another School Principal. Informally called 'Ms. A' as she preferred, she demonstrated an extensive list of admirable qualities, solidifying her role as a woman of commendable virtue, character, and excellence. But more importantly, she stood beyond those descriptors; front, back, and center, she personified education in a way that humanized the system. As we discern who Ms. A was throughout the duration of her work here in IPSA, we unravel the rigid exterior that accompanied her title, and instead come face-to-face with who she truly was alongside it.

If you take the time to ask her, Ms. A humbly describes herself as, *"but a drop in the ocean in life's ebbs and flows."* She remembers her earlier years of service in IPSA, adding that she felt as if she was taken from an aquarium and launched into the vast ocean. Following the recollection with a lighter note, she then reflects, *"The ocean poses risks but it also offers possibilities."* Just like us, she admits to overthinking at times, choosing to confront moments of unease with praying, reading, drinking coffee, going to the beach, and watching children play to unwind. Furthermore, she shares how she collaborates with her team to break down the challenges into more manageable chunks, placing emphasis on shared vision and collective action.

Howbeit, even when shoved head-on with adversity and grander challenges, Ms. A leads a life governed by the principles of praying and showing up, *"I do what I can do."* She is a woman defined by her faith, of which stands incontestable even against the fears that trouble her. As she liked to put it, *"The ocean reveals an infinite God who reigns and who is sovereign."*

Ms. A's routine, though demanding and fluctuating in nature, can be simplified into three parts: check-ins, communication/collaboration, and creation. She takes a predominantly hands-on approach when it comes to sustaining the quality, ensuring the progress, and creating the solutions that altogether contribute to the holistic experience of every IPSAn. Moreover, if there's one thing to remember Ms. A by, it's her dedication to being involved with the community she leads. She told stories that derived from her own experiences, she knew our names, she understood our plights – she encouraged us and remained a constant figure of support, nurturance, and inspiration. By fostering these connections, she learned some chucklesome concepts from us like *memes, k-pop, and anime.*

Ms. A continually opened her mind with us as we overcame odds together. Likewise, as she learned from us, we also learned from her. Witnessing this firsthand, we can attest to the expanse of her teachings, of which are usually condensed into witty slogans – not just empty words, but everything IPSA stands for. A more notable lesson would be The *Three R's* that she consistently spoke of during morning assemblies or school conferences: *Respect God, Respect People, Respect Property and the Environment.* This was then followed by taglines like, *"Live simply, Love deeply, and Learn all you can,"* as well as, *"Purpose, Possibilities, Persistence,"* among others.

As Ms. A resigns from her long-standing role as IPSA's School Principal, she departs with the hope that her work will continue. *"What I have done, others can also do given the same opportunity, support, and trust (and the will to learn, grow, and work with others in unity amidst diversity). Whether the drop in the ocean will create ripples and waves or disappear into the depths, that remains to be seen."*

With all that's said and done, she assures us that under new leadership, the best of IPSA is yet to come. Nonetheless, her absence will be felt deeply by all of us who have been touched by her work. Mrs. Liezel Agtarap-Aguilar definitely wasn't just another School Principal, she went above and beyond to be the A in our ABC's. But alas, a new chapter awaits with an opening written in big letters: **ALL THE BEST, MS. A!**



The 13th SGB with our School Principal, Mrs. Liezel A. Aguilar



The symbolic turn-over of responsibility by Chairman Abelardo H. Nolasco Jr. of the 12th SGB to the Chairman of the 13th SGB, MB Enrique M. Piguig

## IPSA Welcomes New Set of Policy-Makers

IPSA Community welcomes with high hopes the members of the 13th School Governing Board (SGB) who will be serving with a term of three years (2022-2025). They are as follows: MB Enrique M. Piguig (Chairman), MB Narciso G. Mapalo (Vice Chairman/ Chairman, Committee on Parents and Government Affairs), MB Noel D. Arasula (SBG Secretary), MB Richard B. De Belen (Chairman, Committee on Physical Facilities), MB Arci B. Fernando (Chairman, Committee on Finance), MB Rhona M. Sonsona (Chairman, Committee on Academics), and MB Ma. Abigail C. Trinidad (Chairman, Committee on Human Resource). The SGB primarily serves as the policy-making body of the School. It determines the general policies of the school, provides direction through long-term strategic planning, ensures that the school complies with statutory laws and requirements, and fosters harmonious and coordinated efforts towards the attainment of school goals. The members of the 13th SGB were formally presented on February 24, 2022 during the Turn-Over and Testimonial Ceremony.





Taken by: Gwyneth V. Miñano & Nikka Jane M. Baluyut



## Grade 12 Students Install Art Exhibit

by: Eunice Iris B. Uy

Grade 12 students of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar installed an art exhibit on April 11 and 12 as part of their requirements in Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Region (CPAR) subject.

As preparation for the exhibits, students' artworks throughout the second semester were collected for printing. Students attending onsite displayed their works in person while those attending online displayed their works through a video. Students utilized and decorated the multi-purpose hall for the art exhibit. The event lasted two days, with students from STEM 1 and 2 featuring their works on April 11 and students from AHA on April 12.

According to the Virtosu Art Gallery, art exhibitions are a place or area in which 'art' is presented by artists to an audience. These are temporary displays of art, meant to acquaint viewers with the art and the artist. In IPSA, the art exhibition gave way for students to share ideas, showcase artistic talent, and gain insights on their peers' artworks. Mr. Leo Mayo R. Parco, the subject teacher for CPAR, described the art exhibition as a culminating activity that compiled tasks of students in CPAR and in the Arts and Design strand throughout the semester. He emphasized that the main objective of the art exhibit is for students to experience putting up artworks, especially students in the Arts and Design strand. Furthermore, he also highlighted that art exhibits cultivate students to appreciate artworks of their classmates. Most importantly, he expounded on the importance of art exhibits to inspire incoming SHS students and discover about the Arts and Design strand.

Joan Mae P. Garcia, a roomie from Arts and Design, said that art exhibits are a brilliant way to showcase the student's artworks. She further stated that receiving gratitude and praises from visitors paid back the tiring preparations for the exhibit. Joan also gave emphasis on how students should promote themselves creatively. "Art in its all form should also be appreciated and respected in its own way," she highlighted. Despite the event being onsite, students in the online learning mode were still able to join. Jam Ailah T. Maranan, a zoomie from STEM 2, stated that, "despite not being in person, I was still able to participate in the art exhibit." She added that looking at her classmates' works and her own works made the art exhibit more enjoyable and interesting.

Through the art exhibit, IPSAns were able to discover their talents, appreciate the arts, and gain various insights and learnings. Mr. Parco stated that the art exhibit is not solely for Grade 12 students, but also gives a chance for other students to appreciate the arts and get inspired. With this opportunity presented by IPSA, students realized the importance and influence of art in instilling values, self-expression, and creativity.

## A Hearts' Day Worth the Wait

by: Jahziel Rozanne DG. Bernardino

The Student Council coordinated a fulfilling Heart's Day event on February 14, 2022 consisting of the Battle of the Bands, Photo Booth, and Snack House. As the Valentine's Day celebration successfully encouraged many to return onsite, students of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar showcased their musical talents and skills as they enjoyed the day's event. The band, Gunita, took home their second win.

Throughout the morning, council members distributed an assortment of sweet and healthy goodies to pre-school pupils, as well as elementary and high school students. Everyone was then given the chance to capture images with classmates and friends in the photo booth they prepared. Protocols, such as social distancing and wearing of face masks, were implemented and followed at all times to ensure the health and safety of the students and faculty members. For the latter program, the audience were split into two parts, Grades 7 to 9 and Grades 10 to 12, to accommodate the MPH capacity with implied social distancing.

The long-awaited Battle of the Bands was the main event of the day. Kody Jed Tyron D. Maderazo, Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste, and Ahron M. Sonsona enthusiastically hosted the program. After the preliminaries, the Student Council President, Trixie Marie B. Casingal, officially kicked off the program and welcomed everyone. Following the Opening Remarks were the Council's presentation of the criteria for judging and the introduction of the Board of Judges –namely, Mr. Michael C. Adducul, Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo, and Mr. Abelardo H. Nolasco Jr.

The performances commenced as Gunita filled the MPH with their rendition of 'All Too Well', 'You Belong with Me', and 'Locked Out of Heaven'. Their lively performance was matched by the audience singing and flashing their lights. The Coolokoyz fervently followed suit, playing songs like 'Stay in Your Brain' and 'A-O-K' as their crowd jammed along. The showcase didn't end there. The talented students of Grade 12-AHA had their special numbers: Lionel Glenn L. Estayo sang 'Puppet' and 'Enchanted', while Sandra A. Bugagon and Leola Jane L. Buan acoustically performed 'Porque'. As the judges were making their decision on the contest, students who achieved the two-week initiative, 'Perfect 10', were awarded. Finally, as pronounced by Mrs. Liezel A. Aguilar and Mr. Abelardo H. Nolasco Jr., Gunita celebrated their second year as Battle of the Bands winner.

According to Tim Gabriel J. Mallari, the lead guitarist of Gunita, they really enjoyed performing and didn't feel too nervous. "You won't really experience these types of moments every day," he expressed. "It was also nice seeing that students can gather again, and interacting with them was fun." And on behalf of their band, "We are grateful that we were able to perform again in school and glad that this will hopefully be a turning point for more events to come onsite." On the other hand, Jireh Jairwin R. Capulong, the main instrumentalist of the Coolokoys, explained how it was all challenging, nerve-racking, and fun, but they would've done this no matter what, to be able to have experiences in the competition and make memories they could cherish 'til the end. "We are the Coolokoys. We are a group of friends who are brothers from different mothers."

The audience had a lot to say about the events too, especially on the Battle of the Bands. "I looked forward to this year's Battle of the Bands since it's been two years since the last one. I enjoyed the bands' performances; they were entertaining. The other activities were also fun," stated Hannah C. Dela Vega of Grade 8-Humility. "It was good to have it back just like the way it did before the pandemic started. They created a nostalgic feeling for most of the students including me," said Josh Daniel B. Acosta of Grade 11 - STEM 1. "It was lovely and calm as everyone enjoyed their day spending time with friends, with the food given by the SC, memories taken at the photo booth, and the amazing performances from the Battle of the Bands."

"This Year's Battle of the Bands was a Blinder," expressed Lionel Glenn L. Estayo of Grade 12-AHA. "Even if there is a pandemic, our Student Council still had an amazing push-through. Enjoying two different bands and them showing their authenticity. It's very alive and I guess our onsite and online audience really got the feels in their performances." With regard to the other events, he commented, "I believe that the 'Snack House' was very new, I loved how the Student Council was so generous to all the students. The Photobooth was very admirable, we got a lot of pictures and memories from that day's event. Hearts' Day was full of love with my classmates and friends. Everything that happened was very fun and exciting."

And lastly, as remarked by Trixie Marie B. Casingal, the Student Council President, "I was more excited about seeing the smiles on the students' faces, or on their eyes rather, in experiencing SC Heart's Day. Celebrating it on Valentine's Day made the event more uplifting since the expression of love and affection was greatly evident." In addition, she said, "The whole event was still successful where everyone was happy, enjoying and kept safe and healthy. Although there was some turn of events, I am so thankful from the small details to the designs to the giveaways, and eventually, to the wholesome triumph of the Battle of the Bands."



Taken by: Juliana Rose L. Mapalo & Jezreel Tarantan



## IPSA's Chess Varsity Takes on the DPSL

by: Jahziel Rozanne DG. Bernardino

On December 11, 2021 the Chess Varsity of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar competed against chosen representatives from multiple schools of the Dammam Private School League (DPSL). As coached by Mr. Ronaldo M. Alvarez and directed by Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo, the IPSA varsity won as team champions in all divisions.

Chess is a game of skill and strategy. After weeks of preparation for the competition, these student-athletes were able to exhibit their artfulness in tactics on the chequered board. Additionally, to ensure the health and safety of all participants, necessary protocols were duly followed.

In the Under 19 Boys and Girls divisions, Hans Christian Fajarda and Roda Ellene Ballocanag came up on top as champions of their tournament. Alyanna Lei Therise Silen and John Vergel Mendoza won as 2nd Runners-up. In the Under 16 category, Jose Marie Ibañez and Krystel Chloe Esteron were 1st Runners-up, and Abram Malabanan won as 2nd Runner-up. In the Under 14 category, Lleyton Paolo Llavore was the Champion, while Rane Raychelle Ramos and Emmanuel Julier Bambao were 1st Runners-up. And finally, IPSA is once again the victor of the overall team championship.

*"From a personal perspective, the DPSL Chess Tournament was a great opportunity,"* said Hans Christian Fajarda from Grade 11-STEM 2. According to him, going to the U19 bracket was nerve-racking. *"The opponents were making the best moves possible and rarely made mistakes and blunders."* Despite the competition, the players expressed the camaraderie and friendship formed throughout the tournament.

Abram Malabanan from Grade 9-Piety said that he learned a lot from this encounter, and the most noteworthy was the sportsmanship of everyone after the game. *"I had a blast playing with other people. It's also very exciting to interact with the other players with diverse cultures and to see how they play is compelling in its own right."* On the side note, Alyanna Lei Therise Silen from Grade 11-AHA found the architecture of Dhahran Ahliyya School grand and most interesting.

To the aspiring players, the varsity members imparted advice from their experiences: study your basics, meet new opponents and don't be afraid to challenge people. There's no shame in losing, as it helps you improve. When it comes to a tournament, don't play hope chess – always assume that the opponent will play the best move. Thus, always practice with passion and drive to become better.

## IPSA Re-Opens Weekend Clubs for Non-Contact Sports

by: Naomi Grace L. Buan

International Philippine School in Al Khobar (IPSA) re-opens the weekend clubs for non-contact sports which consist of badminton and table tennis last January 14. The target date to finish all thirteen sessions is on April 08, 2022.

The weekend club for badminton is led by Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo and assisted by Mr. John Randolph O. Tiongzon, while Mr. John Kennedy B. Rumbaua coaches in table tennis. The clubs serve as an activity that will develop and improve students' skills and, at the same time, regain their fitness and maintain good health.

Membership application for the table tennis and badminton clubs started on December 1, 2021 which was open to all fully vaccinated students from grades 7 to 12. As a preventive measure, the school management limited the slots available for the students to join. Therefore, the application is on a first-come, first-served basis.

According to Mr. Rumbaua, *"For this year, I want to explore and learn new things, finish the school year with a good and healthy fitness state, stay positive and focus on my goals, and be more resilient in these changing times."* He would like to enhance students' skills and abilities through the weekend clubs despite the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also stated that the situation is stressful and hard to predict since the circumstances are changing rapidly. However, he believes that through the leap of faith in God, they can overcome the situation.

## IPSA Holds Intramurals Virtually for Grade School Pupils

by: Sebastian E. Patiu

Developing sportsmanship is essential to every pupil's mindset as it builds teamwork, character, and respect. Amidst the prevailing situation with Grade School pupils of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar (IPSA) remaining hybrid, the Grade School Department held its intramurals virtually last January 3-4 via Zoom platform with the theme, *'Nurturing Champs in a Changing World.'*

The program was opened enthusiastically by the Master of Ceremony, Mr. Carlo T. Bergado. The Student & Community Affairs Office Head, Mr. Michael C. Adducul, delivered his Welcome Remarks. It was proceeded by the Oath of Sportsmanship led by Rane Raychelle R. Ramos of Grade 6-Amiable, a 2nd placer of the DPSL 2021 Chess tournament. After a while, Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo, the Student Activity Coordinator, formally opened the school intramurals for the Grade School Department.

The pupils had plenty of fun playing games such as Scrabble, DaMath, Pinoy Henyo, Bato-Bato Pick, and Family Feud at this school year's event. Unlike the games or sports in previous years that required physical contact, this year's games had to adapt in view of the present constraints. Josef Robbin M. Sonsona of Grade 5-Courageous shared his experience, *"I had a lot of fun in this school year's online intramurals, and IPSA teachers made online intramurals interesting."*

Julia C. Tambauan of Grade 5-Courageous described her experience and shared, *"My experience was great as the school managed to improvise this year's Intramurals again. I enjoyed the games even though I only got to spectate them."* All in all, the event aimed to provide a platform for students to challenge and hone their skills, as well as to foster teamwork and camaraderie among students and teachers. Certainly, the event was a complete success and concluded with everyone having a fantastic experience.



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page



## The Joint BSP and GSP Investiture: A Promise to Serve

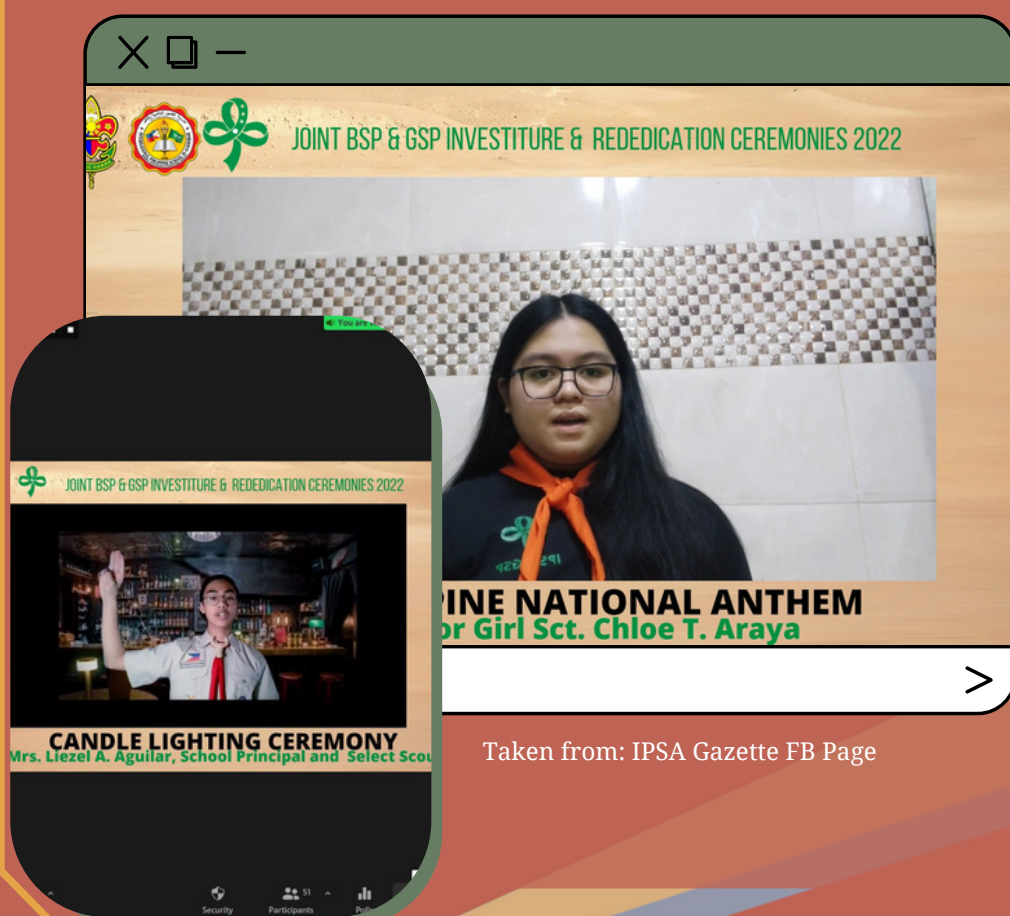
by: Aysel D. Purisima

After the reopening of the school-sponsored clubs, BSP and GSP, this school year, the Joint Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) and Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) Investiture and Rededication Ceremonies were virtually held through Zoom on February 4, 2022. All to-be-invested scout candidates of the BSP and GSP, along with investing officers, and scouters, participated in the meeting. This event marked the formal acceptance of the scouts into the troop, the brotherhood, and the sisterhood of scouting, after fully understanding their duties and responsibilities to serve in their communities.

The Master of the Ceremony, Senior Girl Scout Juliana Rose L. Mapalo, started the event with an introduction. Followed by the Philippine National Anthem sung by Senior Girl Scout Chloe T. Araya, English Prayer by Junior Girl Scout Queen Nathalie S. Jallorina, and Arabic Prayer by Scout Hassan P. Al Zouri. After the opening, Scouter Pearl Celine F. Fabregas, the Vice Principal for Academics, gave her opening remarks and introduced the Investing Officer, Scouter Elias Villazor Bacolot, an Assistant leader Trainer (ALT) with the Course for Managers of Training (CMT) gave his inspirational message to the scouts. Following, Scout Basil Essa I. Adorable led the Pledge of Allegiance.

From this point, the real venture was about to begin. At the Multi-Purpose Hall Stage lies 11 unlit candles, signaling the beginning of the Candle Lighting Ceremony which was led by Mrs. Liezel A. Aguilar, the School Principal, and Select Scouts: Senior BSP Jezreel Tarantan, Senior BSP Ahron Sonsona, Junior GSP Nikaela Avila, Senior GSP Anngela Victoria Velasco, Senior BSP Yuan Cruz, Senior GSP Sherehan Ambug, Senior BSP Charles Name, Junior GSP Aliyah Margaret Buendia, and Senior BSP Adam Khundokar. They recited the parts of the law. A single lighted candle represents the spirit of scouting as stated in the scout law; A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Leading the Investiture and Rededication Ceremony, Scouter Elias Villazor Bacolot gave his inspiring message and words of wisdom. Scouts Jezreel Tarantan and Juliana Rose Mapalo led the affirmation of scout responsibility. After rendering his invaluable time and unwavering commitment to serve as Investing Officer of this Joint BSP and GSP Investiture and Rededication ceremony, a certificate of appreciation was awarded to Scouter Elias Bacolot. It was followed by the dance exercise led by the GSP. Scouter Gerardo Barrot, the Vice Principal for Finance and Administration, gave his closing remarks. Junior Girl Scout Aliyah Margaret Buendia sang the IPSA Hymn. Virtual Pictorial commenced as part of the documentation.



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page



Taken by: Juliana Rose L. Mapalo

## IPSA Kicks Off Junior High School Intramurals in a Hybrid Set-Up

by: Sebastian E. Patiu

Junior High School students of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar (IPSA) took part in the Intramurals that lasted for three days from January 9-11, 2022. The teachers, staff, and students of IPSA gathered online and onsite to witness the game sports matches which were held in a hybrid set-up.

On the First Day of the event, a short opening ceremony was held at the IPSA Multi-Purpose Hall, with other students watching the event via Zoom. Following that, a dry run for the online games and player selection for the onsite games were carried out to ensure proper game flow. Without a doubt, IPSA students were geared up as they prepared to compete against other players from other sections. Chess, Scrabble, and 8-Ball Pool were among the online games available. Students onsite participated in Basketball (3-point shoot-out), Badminton, and Table Tennis.

The online games officially began on the Second Day of the event, with each game being facilitated by a teacher. Students who wished to spectate the games joined the Zoom meeting assigned to do so. As the event's final day approached, the onsite games commenced. Josiah Christian G. Santos of Grade 9- Pious shared, *"It was fun having the intramurals back in the gym with different sports being played just like during the pre-pandemic times. In the school, you can actually feel the competitiveness of the players and their desire to win. I would say this year's intramurals is better than last year's virtual intramurals. Although some parts of the event were still taken place online, getting to compete in the gym reminded me of the pre-pandemic intramurals where everyone competed with the desire to win on the court."*

After a while, the Closing Ceremony was held at the IPSA's Multi-Purpose Hall with onsite and online attendees. The winners of the games were awarded medals, and the intramurals concluded with everyone having a great time. Undoubtedly, this event served as another stepping stone toward the spirit of sportsmanship in IPSA.



## Grade 12 Students Explore Professional Workplace

by: Aysel D. Purisima

This year's Work Immersion, which continues to provide opportunities for students to explore industries relating to their post-secondary goals, was conducted for two consecutive days. The first day was allocated for the Grade 12 students of the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and Arts and Design (AD) strands, collectively known as AHA, at Sofitel Hotel, Al Khobar Branch on March 27, 2022. In addition, aspiring Grade 12 engineering students of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand explored Jotun Powder Coatings Factory, 2nd Industrial City on March 28, 2022. In alignment with the DepEd's K to 12 Curriculum, this program contributes to the meaningful learning experience with the main goal of providing basic education congruent to industry needs, along with a set of objectives for the student participants: (i) to gain relevant and practical industrial insights/skills under the guidance of industry experts and workers, (ii) to appreciate the importance and application of the principles and theories taught in school, (iii) to enhance student's technical, communication, and human relations skills, (iv) to understand the importance of developing good work habits, attitudes, appreciation, and respect for work, and (v) to prepare in meeting the needs and challenges of tertiary education.

Before the actualization of this event, the International Philippine School of Al Khobar (IPSA), completed extensive preparations. They communicated with partner companies/industries by sending a letter of request. Mr. Ricky C. Enriquez, the Senior High School Academic Supervisor, coordinated with the companies or industries. He prepared both a letter to parents informing them of the work immersion program and a parental waiver consent as one of the requirements to join the immersion. He also requested and arranged the budget for food and transportation. Before leaving for the workplace of immersion, the students had a short briefing on the safety precautions: dos and don'ts, proper attire, right behavior, and etiquette. They were also instructed to answer a set of questions in the Learning Outcome Paper after the event serving as their immersion output.

For AHA students of DAY 1, the real venture started upon arriving at the site of immersion- Sofitel Hotel Al Khobar. Students were first assisted to the lobby and waited to be called. Shortly after, they were directed to one of their ballrooms, Paris Hall B, where the seminar of Accor Group (Sofitel's mother company), Sofitel Global, and Sofitel Khobar by Krystian Angelo Kabigting, the host and training manager of Sofitel, took place. Furthermore, groups were made as they sat across multiple tables. Mr. Kabigting asked one member of each table to act as a representative for an activity later on. Along with the discussion of the Accor hotel's history, the values, goals, and experiences of Sofitel guests were taught. With each representative per group, a question and answer portion was conducted at the stage using M&M's as questionnaire cards. Each M&M had a corresponding question that was asked to the representatives.

After a short discussion, the speaker asked the class to form a circle for another activity. They shared each other's names and their respective passions which was done one by one with the twist of not having the same passion as the other members of the class. After the activities were over, students filled out aboard to serve as a memory of their visit. Alas, the picture-taking and awarding took place. After which, they toured the different locations of the hotel. In chronological order, they went to the main hall, reception desk, 'chocolate fountain', outside of the meeting rooms, and lastly, the hotel's buffet dinner, Café Chic, where they ate a handful of full course meals suitable for the afternoon. After eating, they toured a two-floored hotel for them to experience, and see the facilities, and quality of the room. Finally, after touring, students went down to the ground floor and went back to school shortly after through bus service.

According to Brix V. Rañeses, a student from Grade 12- HUMSS taking the course Diplomacy and International Relations, the experience was memorable. "All of the staff and the guest speakers were welcoming and hospitable. I was able to feel at ease and did not feel any form of fear. Their service is high quality in all aspects. From their people-in-charge to preparations, aesthetics, cleanliness, and overall performance while we were being oriented and shown around the building," he said.



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page

Gweneth D. Dizon, another student from Grade 12-HUMSS who is interested in Politics, said, "It was similar to attending a seminar where there was a single guest speaker and nothing else. However, by the end of the day, I was able to talk to other staff in regards to their work experience in Sofitel. Collectively, they loved their work and they are willing to stay as a Sofitel staff."

DAY 2 of the work immersion started as the prospective engineering students went through the process of making the powder coatings at Jotun Powder Coatings. The production had five steps. Firstly from the storage room, they were first presented with the specific raw materials used in creating the powder along with a discussion on the storage process to avoid spoiling. Secondly, they went to the weighing booth where they weighed ingredients/materials for a specific batch order to create the best result. Thirdly, they showed them the machinery and process in the first stage of mixing (pre-mixing) the raw materials in order. After, the mixed raw materials were sent to the dispatch station and dispatched to the extruder. The extruder moistened the pre-mixed raw materials and flattened them. After it had been flattened, the chip would instantly harden and cut into chip sizes. Finally, the last process of the production was the miller, which ground the chips into fine powder. After the final product had been made, it was sent to the laboratory to check if there are any errors in the making or if there are missing components in the powder. From there, the powder was sprayed into a panel and cooked in the oven. While the panel was cooking, the chemist tested the Gel time of the powder. The chemist timed while stirring the powder until it became a gel. After it had tested the Gel time, the chemist also checked the particle sizes of the powder. With the impact tester, the cooked panel with the powder was tested to see if the powder coating is strong enough to coat the panel to not have a crack. Heavy metal was dropped into the panel. Finally, they presented the storage area for the final product. The students went to the lab and examined the first batch of the final product.

With the occurrence of the immersion comes a variety of learning experiences. In addition, four students were interviewed:

Indeed it was truly an educational experience in the Sofitel Hotel, Al Khobar on the first work immersion day. Brix V. Rañeses understood that being a leader is not limited to only having characteristics that make up a leader but is also about the action portrayed towards the community or society. He elaborated, "Highly engaging with them will allow you to view their perspectives and generate the best action or solution towards your community. As a future people-server, I should always put my people first before my own." Gweneth D. Dizon learned that a positive work environment is equivalent to positive workers. She learned from speaker Mr. Kabigting's saying that there is community engagement among the workers, and between the workers and the clients. There was also equality in their working environment.

Moreover, two students who participated on the second day of the immersion at Jotun Powder Coatings also gave their insights. In an interview with an aspiring aeronautical, industrial, and/or computer engineer of Grade 12- STEM 1, Shaun Allen O. Hafalla, he stated that he learned the functions of the machinery, the process of making the powder, and the professionalism of the workers. According to an aspiring electronics engineer of Grade 12- STEM 1, Reilan Ryobi M. Vinuya, he realized the importance of understanding the process of producing the products, ensuring, and prioritizing the safety of the staff at all times.

Unfortunately, not all of the Grade 12 students batch of S.Y. 2021-2022 participated in the work immersion. Other students of the STEM strand have yet to experience the environment related to their field of specialization. With this, the school is continuously seeking companies and hospitals that will allow IPSA Grade 12 Students who will be taking up medical-related courses to conduct their work immersion. The SHS Academic Supervisor has already sent emails and letters to some hospitals and companies and is still awaiting their replies. Mr. Enriquez stated, "There are limitations when conducting work immersion in the Kingdom, one is that some companies will not accommodate large groups for safety and health reasons. Another is the restrictions in Saudi Arabia which eased only this March. If time permits, there will still be immersion."



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page



## Pre-School and Grade School Pupils Return to Campus

by: Eunice Iris B. Uy

On February 1, 2022, Pre-School and Grade School pupils of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar started their safe return to school.

In a press conference on January 9, the Saudi Ministry of Education announced the re-opening of elementary and kindergarten schools for in-class reporting among children under the ages of 12. The successful community immunization by administering the COVID-19 vaccines to children between ages 5 and 11 prompted the advisory. As preparations for the children to return to classes, schools need to implement precautionary measures such as wearing masks, use of hand sanitizer, and social distancing. Despite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, IPSA strives to continue providing education through hybrid classes.

According to the Pre-School Academic Supervisor, Mrs. Annelyn G. Mallare, and Grade School Academic Supervisor, Mrs. Mylene M. Enriquez, a total number of 117 pupils reported onsite on February 1 with 34 pupils in pre-school and 83 pupils in grade school. The school welcomed the pupils and celebrated their return with decorative balloons garnered in the hallways and corridors of the campus. To set pupil reminders, standees were placed in the hallways containing guidelines on protective measures against COVID-19. As preparations for hybrid learning, classrooms were equipped with necessary gadgets such as TVs, web cameras, projectors, and Wi-Fi to continue teaching pupils both in school and in the comfort of their homes. Despite restrictions with classroom interactions, pupils are now in a better position to learn.

According to Mrs. Marjorie R. Cardenas, the Class Adviser of Grade 5-Thrifty, *"A teacher's superpower is flexibility."* The teachers adjusted to the change in the mode of teaching, putting emphasis on flexibility. *"As a response to the demands of the difficult time, I kept myself abreast of the new modes of teaching. I watched some tips, ideas, programs, and demonstrations on the internet which helped me innovate or modify my ways of teaching in a 'new normal' set-up,"* she added.

As the pre-school and grade school pupils finally return to school, face-to-face interactions in the classrooms are finally fulfilled. *"We have seen and learned a lot that still in-person school is best for them. They get more education at school,"* said Mrs. Cardenas. With the continued observance of protective measures against COVID-19, IPSA fulfills its mission and provides safe and quality education in the adversity of the pandemic.



Taken by: Juliana Rose L. Mapalo

## Badminton Athletes Win in DPSL

by: Naomi Grace L. Buan

The student-athletes of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar (IPSA) participated in the Dammam Private Schools League (DPSL) Badminton Tournament last January 22 held at the International Schools Group (ISG) Dhahran.

DPSL Badminton Tournament is a competition that allows students to showcase their skills in badminton. With a consistent strike of gold trophies for the past four years, IPSA once again claimed victory with its fifth win.

Although there were many restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, that did not stop the tournament and training from occurring. Several safety measures were taken by the officials such as separating the training sessions of male and female athletes and limiting training days to reduce physical contact. Although these measures were executed as safety precautions, they did create some setbacks. Due to the lessened training days, new members of the team were not able to be fully trained as much as the coaches wanted.

As per the official result of the tournament, the champions of Under 19 Boys were Joseph D. Panuela Jr., Lord Kenneth T. Camagong, John Wilson S. Arguelles, and Ediberto T. Gutierrez Jr. The Under 19 Girls' champions were Kristina Cassandra D. Mariñas, Mary Janelle H. Gonzales, Krysten Naomi B. De Belen, and Jannah D. Balasbas. The Under 16 Boys' 4th placer were Ralph Angel M. Credo, Meinard D. Batara, Gian Paul G. Sagun, and Humayd M. Ambug. The Under 14 Girls' 1st runners-up were Mikaella E. Custodio, Mary Divine Reine D. Batara, and Margaret C. Mallare. While the Under 14 Boys' 5th placer were Micael Ver P. Rendon, Carlo Alexis T. Paragoso, Jayden Nathanael G. Tapaya, and Jacob Yohan C. Estella.

The coaches who trained the male athletes were Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo and Mr. Christopher T. Sotelo. The girl athletes were trained by Mr. Ted Evan H. Gallano. All the coaches were supervised by the varsity team manager, Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo.

## School-Sponsored Clubs Reorganized

by: Eunice Iris B. Uy

International Philippine School in Al Khobar reorganized the Rondalla Club, Junior and Senior Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) Club, and Junior and Senior Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) Club this School Year 2021-2022.

Prior to the reformation of the clubs, invitations to join or renew memberships were handed out to Grades 7 to 12 students. The club moderators, Mr. Rowel O. Arevalo (Rondalla club), Mr. Leonardo M. Collado (Junior and Senior BSP), and Mrs. Sharon D. Tarantan (Junior and Senior GSP) facilitated the interview process of applicants wishing to join the club.

In the adversity of the pandemic, IPSA continues to provide learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Taking advantage of the hybrid approach, the school-sponsored clubs push productivity and inspire students to work on their knowledge and skills. With the reformation of these clubs, students can dabble in different interests all whilst allowing them to explore their hobbies and talents. The clubs cater to various student interests. The Rondalla Club is a cultural-musical group where students can learn to play Rondalla instruments such as bandurria, octavina, guitar, bass guitar, drums, laud, and chimes. The Junior and Senior BSP and GSP aim to help students develop values, leading them to become responsible students and competent leaders. Together, these clubs were reformed to benefit students and enable them to become active members of these clubs.

*"It has provided me with the opportunity to play with my friends once again,"* said Jejomar Aaron B. Teves, a member of the Rondalla Club. The reorganization of the clubs enabled students to once again connect with their peers outside of the classroom. Senior Girl Sct. Juliana Rose L. Mapalo, President of the Junior and Senior GSP and a long time member of GSP said, *"It definitely brought back nostalgic memories pre-pandemic. I've learned a lot while being in GSP such as developing and experiencing the virtue of leadership. It can also help oneself from getting out of their shell because GSP is very welcoming."* The reopening of these clubs helped students develop themselves. *"It helped me to be proactive and be able to communicate. It's definitely a place where everyone can learn to improve themselves and with others,"* Juliana added.

Though the pandemic has changed how schools function, school clubs are still a vital part of a student's school life. The club communities prove important to each student, evident in the skills and values they continue to develop. As IPSA reorganizes school-sponsored clubs, holistic education is expected among students.



## Digital Addiction among Teenagers

by: Jahziel Rozanne DG. Bernardino

Digital addiction is the subversive vulnerability on digital media and devices, and it is one of the prevalent issues presently experienced by teenagers. As of today, work, education, recreation and communication are accessible and more developed online, thus creating this concern. Teens are online almost constantly. And though there are notable advantages, the perpetual use and abuse of technology has become both a dependency and necessity.

The issue of digital and technological addiction continues to escalate as the larger portion of our time is spent online. According to research, 95% of teens have access to at least one smartphone, while 45% say that they are almost constantly online. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram being the popular media. Aside the 5 to 7 hours spent by students for school, the screen time of teenagers presently estimates up to 7.7 hours a day. With school and education presently done virtually, this was unavoidable. Additionally, social media and online gaming take up a part in the culture of current teenagers. The most common recreational activities nowadays are watching movies and series, streaming videos or music, single and multi-player gaming. Though, through an objective view, these young adults aren't fully at fault. Major technological companies purposefully engineer their applications and software to the compulsive tendencies of teenagers to maximize engagement. On the other hand, teens commonly use the internet as a type of coping mechanism, thus proving that there are indeed advantages to being connected to the virtual world. These include staying connected with friends, meeting a community of people with shared interests, sharing art or music, learning new hobbies, exploring and expressing themselves, exchange of news and information, and discovering effective coping strategies among other things. But just as anything, there are downsides to anything taken over moderation.

The subject of technological addiction isn't merely the overuse of devices but rather a further compulsiveness to what it brings. The common types of such fixations are: gaming addiction, social media addiction, online gambling, cyber sexual addiction, online shopping and net compulsion, and work-related fixation. Consequently, this issue brings about many dangers to teens who are technologically exposed as it impacts different aspects of their lives. Academically, digital addiction leads to procrastination and avoidance of work, and lower grades as well as academic performance. This relates to their further disinterest in subjects regarding reality. Socially, at the expense of their devices, they lose personal relations outside the computer and disconnect from relationships in their immediate environment (family, school, and even friends). The lack of interpersonal social skills develops further issues regarding social anxiety and such. Physically, sleep deprivation and eyesight strain (visual problems) are now very common, as well as the lack of physical activity impacting their health. It may show through poor nutrition, or poor personal hygiene. Emotionally, addiction may cause them to be agitated, distraught and disengaged, and be irritable when away from their devices which are similar to withdrawal tendencies. Researchers who surveyed screen time and mental health found the correlation that higher hours are associated with poorer mental health and greater stress, while social support and better coping behaviors were associated with lower screen use.

Inevitably, technology will continue to evolve. In an ideal future, there would be balance between technological uses and the wellbeing of teens. We can't stop using technology and digital devices, but we can take steps to avoid compulsive and destructive behaviors. And by recognizing this issue, steps can be taken to slowly resolve this. Individuals can take microsteps to rewire their brains into changing habits such as casually creating barriers to conveniently using their phones, personally creating limits to media consumption and preventing access is straightforward self control. Digital detoxing at gradually increasing intervals can help and allow an individual to revert focus on other matters. Find time to socialize in person with friends and family, and even spend time with own projects or activities. Students can prioritize needs over immediate gratification and develop better communication skills to their environment. Balance is achievable when the people are aware that steps need to be taken to avoid the technological vulnerabilities of young adults.

Accordingly, digital addiction is one of the major issues in today's society, mainly affecting teens and young adults. This is caused by both necessity and compulsiveness given that much of our time is spent online. Whether it's productive or entertaining, much of modern culture is through the virtual world. Though there are advantages and disadvantages present, the negative impacts of different addictions are a danger to teens. Thus, in order to resolve this issue, it takes individuals' recognition of the problem to be able to create microsteps that will recondition addiction into a self-controlled balance.

## Hypersexualization in Media: Modern Juvenility at a Cost

by: Thyreign Asher C. Flores

Moving forward as successors of the internet age, our generation has never known life without an online presence. Interacting with our environment and figuring out our identity isn't necessarily a private matter anymore; we've grown up glued to our screens and willingly delegated ourselves on public forums at the expense of conformity and indoctrination – seeking companionship in blank profiles, validation in the form of passive icons, guidance in generated questions, and inspiration in pixelated boxes or well-curated feeds. While Generation Z is primarily characterized by our 'digital nativity' we have yet to address the pile of skeletons that the title stands on, with one of them being the hypersexualization of our youth.

While the definition of hypersexualization already stands as a widely disputed topic, there remains one common denominator: 'the sexualization of public space, (involving) the attribution by the media of a sexual character to a product or behavior.'

This issue is already deeply ingrained in our history with past representations of media (as observed in famous tabloids, TV shows, and figures), but there is no denying how the newer pipeline of Tiktok, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. provides hypersexualization with a more extensive reach. As younger audiences enter the space, the culture of explicit posts and interactions continues to emerge, selling a blatant idea that participating in this behavior is heavily encouraged and rewarded. We can see how normalized it is once we see the same recycled trends: NSFW (Not Safe For Work) challenges, overconsumption of objectifying material, sensual songs and dances, and the notorious pioneers that have reached celebrity status because of it.





*Continued from: Hypersexualization of Media - Modern Juvenility at a Cost*

Though we can argue that these spaces are prominently penetrated by adults, the problem lies in the fact that there aren't enough restrictions to prevent, monitor, and resolve how they influence younger audiences. Moreover, our society has moved onto capitalizing on this phenomenon. Talent agencies scout and exploit child influencers, large-scale companies market products to appeal to a mature market, and social media platforms thrive on the presence of predators as they hide under the guise of 'autonomy' and 'free will' – but there is nothing remotely liberating about conditioning literal children to be victims. Not when it comes with the price of physical & mental health, risky sexual behavior, distorted body image, addiction, and maligned character while simultaneously promoting concepts of misogyny, sexism, gender stereotyping, and prejudice.

We currently live in a world wherein 'acting older' is no longer tied to values of maturity or innocently mirroring adult figures, but rather governed by the ideals which forcedly place our youth at a compromising position and discreetly transfer the blame on them. It's time for us to change that and hold ourselves accountable; we must recognize our social responsibility to create a cultural shift which consciously works on eradicating hypersexualization and forming policies on child protection, as well as providing accommodations to inform everyone involved. It's also crucial to note that, while this is a global effort, the movement starts at an individual scale. We must question how we enable and/or participate in hypersexualized media, along with how it manifests itself in our portrayal of self (along with others), addressing that we are all part of the problem, and that small steps collectively add up to a grander change.

## Freedom Part I: On Free Will

by: Louis Gabriel D. Reyes

When we speak of freedom, we generally mean two concepts: a 'freedom of'—as in sovereignty, autonomy, or volition, and a 'freedom from'—as in liberation or emancipation; a 'free will' and a 'free man'. By free will I mean the proposition that one 'could've chosen alternatives' and wasn't determined by uncontrollable forces or the causal laws of nature. When thinking of free will, we invoke implicitly a 'self' or the 'subjective experience of me' as the agent and cause of choice. Assuming that this "self" is real and not an illusion, for free will to exist, one must contend that it's an autonomous choice-maker ungoverned by internal and external forces, and that it's in control of its wills which brings about conscious actions.

Progressions in neuroscience, psychology, and biology have gradually diminished belief in the existence of free will, persuading some philosophers to take stances like determinism and compatibilism. A strong argument against free will is the indisputable fact that we are, to a great degree, controlled by unconscious drives, wants, beliefs, and brain processes—and that these even control voluntary actions.

Let's begin with some axioms:

1. Thoughts just appear in our minds. This effortless thinking is an action, but not a conscious, voluntary one—therefore refutations of free will cannot be based upon this.
2. In order to act out a conscious, voluntary, deliberate action, one must 'will' it—defined in the broad sense as wanting.
3. There could be no free, deliberate action without will, for action without will is evidently not free.
4. "I will...": 'I' pertains to 'myself', and 'will' is a verb—an action.

Now, try the following: Relax your mind (to limit external factors that might influence your thinking). Choose a country; among the first few countries thought of, choose one of them. Focus on every action you take so that they are as voluntary and deliberate as possible.

Some propositions must be conceded: (1) You've chosen a country. Before you chose it, you 'willed' to choose it. 'Willed' is as much of an action as any action. You didn't will this will. (2) When you were choosing, you either chose arbitrarily or according to a basis. You didn't choose to choose accordingly. If you try again and choose a basis, then at that point, choosing a basis would be identical to choosing a country.

Conclusion: Underlying every action 'A' you believe to be conscious and voluntary is an action 'A0' that you did not will consciously. As Schopenhauer said, "One can do what he wills but can't will what he wills". Under every action, a 'willing' occurs involuntarily and unconsciously. Our wills are shaped by uncontrollable factors. This, to me, is a refutation of free will as defined above.

In addition, many studies demonstrably show that countless internal and external factors—these include environment, social factors, health, childhood, genetics, personality, values, experience, age, neurophysiology, and so on—undeniably affect behavior such that one can predict in probabilistic terms, not without painstaking work, a specific aspect of an individual's future behavior. Many thinkers propose that these factors play an integral role in *determining* our next action to such an extent that "we couldn't have acted differently". The current landscape of science and philosophy is leaning toward a stance of 'no free will', if not determinism—which asserts that every occurrence is a product of causality. This landscape seems to be heading towards a future wherein free will is either an illusion or nonexistent.

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## Next Chapter: The Metaverse

by: Thyreign Asher C. Flores

When encountering the word 'metaverse,' it absurdly sounds like some sort of Sci-Fi-esque vernacularism derived from a conspiracy theorist's fever dream. With the term being first coined by writer Neal Stephenson as a portmanteau of the words 'meta' and 'verse' back in 1992, it began with a loose definition as a "three-dimensional virtual space." Though not so far-fetched now, it was an inconceivable concept during that time, as the internet had yet to evolve into the vast expanse that it is today.

While this may have been a ridiculous sentiment decades ago, the year 2022 sounds the alarm for breaking news: the metaverse is real now, and there is no stopping its swift integration into our society. Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Meta Platforms (formerly known as Facebook) firmly believes that "the metaverse will become a successor to the mobile internet," introducing the world to a myriad of investments such as blockchains, non-fungible tokens, artificial intelligence, and virtual/augmented reality. Life as we know it, will not merely use the internet for assistance, but eventually lean towards depending on it. This new age positions us into a trillion-dollar scene of digital identities, arts, and real-estate – collectively becoming a larger extension to the reality we've been accustomed to.

Even before the word itself trended, we've already geared for the metaverse without intending to. Throughout the evolution of the internet, our use of it increased and surpassed physical barriers. Interactive video games that mimicked real-life events provided users with a large scope of experience; social media united groups of people across the globe to foster deeper connections despite being miles apart; online shopping through sites such as Shein and Amazon dominate the retail scene with extensive catalogues; mobile devices reduced the need for physical tools such as books, clocks, and cameras; and, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, education shifted into the modern form of instruction, thus resorting to forums such as Zoom and Google Meet. Now, more than ever, our data is easily accessible and manipulated – altering our perception of reality and ourselves altogether. Digital nativity made it impossible for us to know a life without the virtual space.

We cannot discredit the positive impact of the metaverse. The way that it provides accessibility, business opportunities, and immersive interactions throughout our progressing society shouldn't be something to ignore. However, we also have to address that this is not a seamless fantasy like the ones we read in fiction. The metaverse, despite opening the doors for these wonders, also opens the doors for cybercrime, addiction, privacy and security risks, and hardware issues. Moreover, it enables giant corporations to abuse their power, implementing projects that are harmful for the psyche of participants and damaging what's left of our natural environment. According to Dr. Daria Kuss, Lead for the Cyberpsychology Research Group at Nottingham Trent University, "The excessive use of virtual realities may be associated with the experience of symptoms of mental disorders, including addiction, depression, and anxiety." Furthermore, the technology (cryptocurrency) currently used to maintain current innovations require about 2100 kilowatt hours (kWh) per transaction, an excessive price that we pay via the climate crisis.



Continued from: Next Chapter: The Metaverse

Amidst the thrill for a newer chapter and the stories that accommodate it, we must take a step back and reevaluate how we want to move forward. In the pursuit of change for the greater good, be wary of what changes we welcome. **There is no denying the emergence of the metaverse, but it does allow us the question: as it meets us, how do we meet it?**

## Freedom Part II: The Illusory Self

by: Louis Gabriel D. Reyes

If free will doesn't exist, then everyone is unfree in the sense that they are puppets of the laws of nature, bound in chains by biology, and enslaved by factors that create their wants. —Then, how can one be free? How should the universe be constructed in order to accommodate free will in conscious beings? —In a way that renders the 'self' the creator of his value-hierarchies, and in a way that external factors can influence—but do not ultimately compel—his judgment. Notice that this presupposes the notion of the self—one's experience of oneself—to either be supernatural *or* as something resembling an essence or entity that takes charge of a 'control panel', and has free will notwithstanding its coexistence with biology and its possible intervention. The self, as I will maintain, is not some distinct thing from the body but an epiphenomenon of brain processes—this 'experience of me' is merely a 'sense of self'.

To support this, I will turn to a developing research enterprise (yes, I think science has a say in philosophical questions); namely, the neuroscience of psychedelics. Michael Pollan's 2018 book, *How to Change Your Mind: The New Science of Psychedelics*, highlights the research of a team led by neuroscientist Robin Carhart-Harris that aimed to explain in neuroscientific terms the psychedelic experience. Such experiences have led people to experience what researchers call an 'ego dissolution' or 'ego death' (not as in self-esteem), and for some an 'out-of-body' experience. Their sense of subjectivity has been stripped away, leading them to experience being 'one and connected with everything' in a literal, but not objective, sense. Researchers injected volunteers with LSD and psilocybin and used scanning techniques such as fMRI and MEG in order to observe their brain activity while 'tripping'. They found that psychedelics reduce brain activity most especially in one specific brain network: *the default mode network* (DMN). It is that network responsible for effortless inner thought such as daydreaming, reflection, and mental time travel and is most active when we're thinking about mental constructs such as the self or ego. One of its vital functions is to regulate and establish order in the brain, influencing other parts, so that it would not descend into chaos or, more specifically, the overload of sensory input that would render the brain unable to process anything. The DMN deactivates whenever a person takes in psychedelics, especially in high doses, resulting in the shutting-down of their sense of self, thus showing that the DMN, being a brain network, performs an essential role in maintaining the sense of self—and therefore supporting the claim that what we call the 'self' is actually an epiphenomenon of natural mechanisms.

This essay's thesis: the DMN creates and sustains the mental construct of ego or sense of self, for it is impossible to acquire knowledge, especially using science, of the 'self' as defined above as a supernatural or an entity to which we identify ourselves with. To have free will, one must invoke a 'self' that cannot be explained by science. The self, defined above, is an illusion; therefore, the lack of free will does not entail that we are unfree. The word 'unfree' here is *meaningless*; it's not that we are unfree—it's just that it's impossible to be 'free'. Moreover, one cannot deem all men to be unfree if the state of being free is just unattainable in perpetuity (just as one cannot judge everyone to be 'inferior' if none of them has a pet unicorn, supposing that having one would make them 'superior').

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## Going Offline is Lavish, Don't You Think? : Dangers of Exposure to Online Communities

by: Zyr J. Medina

How great of a gift was the Internet to us—in terms of convenience, speed, and connectivity? Cyberspace gave us a more comfortable medium for self-expression and communication. This became an area where the Six Degrees of Separation theory (which states that any inhabitant of the Earth could meet anyone in the world with a maximum of six or fewer mutual connections between them and another person) was better proven. We've gained more friends, in a faster way. There's no need to walk into a library to research for your thesis. A click is enough for a McFlurry to appear on your table. Best of all, we now have the accessibility to information which provides an ever-evolving perspective about ourselves and the world around us.

Even though we reap the greatest benefits of the Internet almost every millisecond, this isn't necessarily just a good thing. A short moment of us letting our guard down could result in potential dangers to us and the people we interact with within the platform.

Through the exponential success of digital wagering platforms, social media and the Internet aided and expanded gambling opportunities. As stated in a review on *The Role of Virtual Communities in Gambling and Gaming Behaviors*, "Digital games also increasingly include monetary features, such as microtransactions, blurring the line between gambling and gaming. — Whereas some gambling communities may provide protection from excessive gambling habits, gaming communities seem to solely motivate gaming behavior and purchase intentions. The role of online communities should be acknowledged in prevention and treatment of gambling and gaming problems."

One more side effect that the forum could present to its users is its influence on our personalities. We, humans, are social creatures, but it will reach a point when our traits, morals, and perspectives are impacted by the community we love hanging out with. Don't get me wrong, changing our perspective in life isn't negative. I just find that the way we alter our view and the intention that we set our mind on when our point changes is destructive.

First off would be the evidence of the online disinhibition effect we experience in Cyberspace or the lack of restraint one feels when communicating online in comparison to communicating in person. Rather than thinking of disinhibition as the revealing of an underlying 'true self', we can conceptualize it as a shift to a constellation within self-structure, involving clusters of effect and cognition that differ from the in-person constellation.

The second exhibition of the Internet affecting our unique mixes includes the various displays we see online; the excessively edited posts from influencers and marketing ads – two of which promote narcissism and compulsivity.

Reviewers managed the Narcissistic Identity Stock (NPI), a scale planned to determine narcissistic characteristics by enquiring test takers to select between articulations. Independently, autonomous evaluators who did not meet the subjects analyzed their Facebook pages, agreeing to pre-set objective and subjective criteria. The Narcissism and Social Networking Web Sites research by Buffardi & Campbell concludes that "because narcissists have more social contacts on Facebook than the non-narcissists, the average user will experience a social network that over-represents narcissists... [This] raises the possibility that ... norms of expression on social networking sites will be pulled in the direction of greater self-promotion."



Continued from: *Going Offline is Lavish, Don't You Think? : Dangers of Exposure to Online Communities*; Page 9

The advertising for clothing brands motivated buyers to purchase online, and their motivation was linked to the immediate gratification following an Internet purchase and the ability to shop unobserved and without company which increased the percentage of compulsive buyers by 17.7%.

Lastly, with the spread of the pandemic that we are now surviving comes the rampage of the infodemic, too. WHO Director-General raised the concern that *'we are not just fighting the pandemic, we are also fighting infodemic'* Since the pandemic gave us more time at home and online, this enabled an explosion of unchecked information and the spread of misinformation. Social media use increased by 20–87% around the globe during the COVID-19 crisis. The deceiving data around the illness is coming from different sources counting politicians, world pioneers, celebrities, noticeable open figures, scheme scholars, and indeed the common open. Fake news is taking over social media and putting open well-being at hazard. The scale of the emergency and ubiquity of the deluding data request that researchers, wellbeing data experts, and writers see it as their proficient duty to assist the common open recognize fake news stories.

There are other dangers that the Internet and its Cyberspace impose on ourselves and our health if we let what we see on our screens take over us.

Within its platform, the Internet formed new relationships between users from various backgrounds, resulting in a rich jovial structure. Communities help form who we will be and how we'll take in the things we learn depending on us. With all of the above, is it really considered a door leading to entanglement or one to greatness?



## Freedom Part III: The Impossibility of Free Will

by: Louis Gabriel D. Reyes

I will now put forth the argument that not only is the self an illusion, but also impossible. Free will necessitates a *'willer'*, a self, whose definition is such: as an immaterial (in the literal sense) soul or an entity that's the center of experience. The latter is false as per the argument put forth in part II. As for the former, remember that the psychedelics have affected the ego or self by significantly decreasing blood flow in the default mode network: if the self is immaterial (supposing the immaterial exists and can exist), then how did material, chemical processes affect it? I assert the following: the material can only affect material things and not, in any conceivable way, affect the immaterial. Therefore, if a material self is an illusion and an immaterial one is impossible, then a self, defined as either, cannot exist at all. There's no willer, and therefore no will. Thus a complete or limited "free" will—as in the lack of *necessity* in will—and unfree will, are not possible.

What does it mean to say that the will—the voluntary, deliberate will—is an illusion? In the same way that free will is an illusion: we *feel* we have it. We feel we have an actual self, we feel that we will, and we feel that our wills and actions are freely made. A sense of self is different from an actual self, therefore we cannot will. Following the logic, our wills cannot be free because there's no *'will'* to begin with. 'I' and *'will'* are thus only words practically used to make sense of our own narratives. What we think of as our wills are not wills of an actual self but drives, impulses, urges, compulsions, responses to stimuli,...—all environmental and biological factors which we have no control over—of an organism. It is directly counterintuitive to think of free will as an illusion, much more our wills and our conception of ourselves; and even more absurd—and perhaps outrageous—to think of ourselves as purely biological organisms obeying natural laws.

These all seem to lead us to a stance of determinism, but I am not arguing for that here. I am only arguing about the falsity of the free will stance. Determinists assume the certainty of *causality* as a fundamental principle, and not as mental constructs designated to events, created fictions whose purpose is to relate ideas of events together in our minds, as suggested by Hume and Nietzsche. A critique of determinism would therefore be a critique of causality.

The word *'free'* cannot be readily applied to the word *'will'* since it's impossible for a will to be free if it's just an illusion, an idea, a conception (not to mention that the willer is also such). What is a *'free idea'*? Can it be free in the same way that a man can be autonomous? Or free from persecutors and oppressors? The mistake of the designation of the concept of freedom to human will is to be expounded in the next essay.

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## Is NFT Art Really Valuable?

by: Gweneth D. Dizon

No—it is not. I, even, discourage you from patronizing NFTs in general. Here are reasons why:

Sotheby's, a nearly 300-year-old fine arts company, sold \$100 million worth of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) last year with Bored Ape Yacht Club (BAYC) and CryptoPunks as their frontliners. However, you may ask: *"What are NFTs? What are BAYC and CryptoPunks?"*

Let me keep it simple; NFTs are similar to Bitcoin and Ethereum, two of the most widely known cryptocurrencies. However, instead of sharing the uniform design, NFTs are distinctive; it comes in any digital item: images, videos, audios, etc. Furthermore, Slance from YouTube briefly explains it as *"a way to verify true ownership... by attaching a unique key to it via a process called minting."* Afterwards, it is encrypted and secured to a blockchain network to represent proprietorship. "Whoever started the minting process is given the key that unlocks the ownership data on the blockchain," Slance adds. Moreover, it can be bought and sold like rare Pokémon and Yu-Gi-Oh cards yet come with an intricate system to obtain a verified NFT.



*Continued from: Is NFT Art Really Valuable?; Page 10*

This may suggest that it can protect one's intellectual property. Unfortunately, that is not the case for many non-NFT artists. The minting process has few regulations—without any quality control whatsoever. Juu\_Honey on Twitter, a digital artist, posted a tweet saying: *"Anyone can mint an NFT and attach The Mona Lisa (for example) [then] sell it. No one will check if the person selling it was the original artist."* Additionally, Zilch, also a digital artist on Twitter, tweeted: *"[Someone] sold my profile pic as an NFT [without my consent] as part of a collage for nearly \$100K."* It is even baffling to know that his tweet was minted and posted in Valuables by Cent; the most recent offer was \$420. Multiple non-NFT artists are becoming victims of these art thieves. In fact, existing NFTs are not even protected from being stolen.

Ironically, people are saying that NFTs are merely computer files without proof of ownership and authenticity; there are numerous memes circulating about taking screenshots of these crypto-arts instead of paying them thousands of US dollars. Unlike traditional art where there are legal documents, NFTs are easily fabricated, and it does not entirely belong to a specific person; actually, there are reports of NFTs simply vanishing from buyers' wallets. Although there are genuine NFT artists, BAYC and CryptoPunks are almost similar to each other with minimal color and clothing changes; but what you still see is the same monkey or 8-bit human. This completely undermines the unique, distinctive, and secured qualities of NFTs. More to this, it is absolutely absurd to realize that NFT collectors and capitalists pay huge amounts of money for files that can be right-clicked and saved for free. In the end, NFTs are reproducible.

NFTs are status symbols, which is similar to traditional art back then. *"If an artist has a degree of notoriety and cultural weight, acquiring their work is valued as well. In turn, this grants the art holder bragging rights, which can be monetized as a boosted social status,"* Rahul Nambiampurath said in his article. Aristocrats bought art not only for the status symbols but also for aesthetic appreciation; *"[They bought] art for the sake of enjoying it and rewarding the artist appropriately so they could make more of it,"* Rahul adds. Yet in this modern world, anyone who owns a generative NFT is prestigious; holding an authenticated BAYC or CryptoPunks NFT gives one VIP access to exclusive parties frequented by celebrities. This idea completely wipes out the creative value of artworks. Instead, it is replaced with the desire for fame and money.

Lastly, blockchain technology leaves an insane amount of carbon footprint. In 2021, sales of NFTs reached a total estimation of \$25 billion. Yet, a single NFT transaction has a carbon impact of 211 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> and costs 340-kilowatt hours on average, which is equivalent to a month of electric power in Europe, driving for 1,000 kilometers, or flying for two hours. To look at it at a larger scale, 18% of NFT artists in SuperRare have a carbon footprint larger than ten tonnes in one year; this is equal to a whopping 12 transatlantic trips or a five-year electric supply for a European resident. Sadly, most people are unaware of its negative environmental impacts; TreeLings is an upcoming NFT project founded by Plant A Tree Co., a questionable organization that is *'dedicated to preserving our planet'*. In addition to that, an art exhibit in Los Angeles showcased NFTs that highlight climate change and environmental degradation. Both are shockingly ironic.

The increasing fame of NFTs merely benefits capitalists and elitists; they already have negative consequences to artists, the art industry, and the planet. The advancement of technology is inevitable, and I agree that the arts should adapt new ways to blend in with this era. However, comprehensive and tighter regulations must be implemented, and more sustainable and eco-friendly blockchain transactions must be made. We still have a long way to go, but how far do we still have left?

## Freedom Part IV: Illusions We Live By

by: Louis Gabriel D. Reyes

Free will is hitherto one of the most enduring, indispensable, civilization-preserving mental constructs. It has come to pass at this juncture that the belief that the concept of freedom can be applied to the concept of will is fallacious as the latter is shown to only be an idea. This belief, along with the illusion of the self, has perpetuated the problem of free will. When people speak of *'Can the will be free, unconstrained in its actions?'*, they are speaking, unknowingly, either about wants being free or their illusory conception of themselves as able to will freely.

The earliest philosophers, of course, didn't consider the possibility of the will or self being mental constructs. In the midst of their philosophizing, they thought: *"Can the will be 'free'?"* Wait: what is meant by *'free'*? —The feeling, longing, and desire for freedom is something too ingrained, intrinsic, integral to human nature. Being a slave, being owned and used by a master, being in prison, being locked up in chains—these are the most concrete instances of the concept of unfreedom. The evaluation *'free is better than unfree'* may be as predisposed... innate... as natural as the evaluation *'good is better than bad (by definition)'*. Freedom, as opposed to slavery or captivity, is thus seen to be a position of strength, power over weakness... feebleness... infirmity... impotence... worthlessness. As such, one is bound to value the *'superior freedom'* over *'that pathetic, humiliating unfreedom'*. The illusion of self—this experience of *'I'*—has influenced man's thinking to the extent that he asks: *"Am I free to the very bottom of myself? Am I the one who gives commands or am I the commanded? Who controls me? God? Nature? My drives? No, only myself! I am not cattle... not a being who kneels at the first sight of my keeper... I have no keeper. No: I am a man, not a puppet."*

The reason why free will is a lasting problem is that people have carelessly applied the word *'free'* to the word *'will'*, that they have applied the psychological feeling or experience of liberation, slavery to their actions—and out arises the concept of *'free will'*, human autonomy, self-governance—such is my speculation. And insofar as one is disconcerted by the possible untenability or probable falsity of free will, he is such because he associates the *'lack of freedom of—'* with *'the lack of freedom from—'*, in spite of the impossibility of free or unfree will, as argued by these essays.

Of course, free will is an essential thing when it comes to philosophical questions of morality, God, and criminal psychology—but that is not something I will touch. Nevertheless, free will is an illusion we cannot live without; no: we cannot help but act as if it exists. Prosperous societies assume free will. We treat each other not as machines, organisms, or clusters of atoms, but as sovereign, responsible individuals that are much, much more than just *'animals'*. —And it should stay that way, even if the day comes where conclusive proof for the inexistence of free will comes, even if everything I've said thus far against our freedom of will is true—or false.

## Cancel Culture

by: Zyr J. Medina

For sure everyone has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other social media app. Most of the time, our online presence is far from who we really are. Everything must be perfect when you're in that other dimension. We are pressured that all bodies should be perfect, you should be properly composed at all times, and there will also be a point when you're forced to defend a common view. Because whoever is against that view will be canceled.

**Cancel.** A word that means to omit or take something out of the picture. You can hear it in math class, when adversity makes your routine inflexible, or when you politely say no to a planned reunion. However, as the online community has grown, the meaning of the term evolved. Its connotation has been distorted and more negative than what it originally implied.



*Continued from: Cancel Culture; Page 11*

What it means to be ‘canceled’ nowadays is to be criticized for two things:

1. **Your opinions toward a topic.** A typical example for this is when someone prefers thriller movies over dramatic movies in a poll and the user who posted the poll is an avid fan of ‘The Notebook’... Get emotionally ready for a grand debate, my friend. Or;
2. **How you have treated or are treating a group of people.** Take it that you’ve had an account since you were ignorant and uneducated about social injustices, then out of some type of hostility against you, another user tried to find your flaws by scrolling through your old posts.

In other words, the online society is a mob and it’s against you. If you say something against anyone, you will most definitely be revoked of credibility. The first criterion refers to the mindset that only one answer is correct and in any circumstance, it remains unbeatable. While the take of the second standard is that there is an ideology when it comes to these platforms that no one can change... they don’t have the ability to change. No matter the time, or the experience, they would be who they were.

When such events happen, drama increases and the gossip gets interesting. Even though the conscious mind denies the fact we enjoy these types of tension, curiosity remains engraved and we watch it anyway. They seldom could be great persuaders, too. But who are they? The hawks, the hunters, the explorers of victims whom they can cancel. The people who try hard to prove that they are aware of and are actively attentive to important facts and issues in the society or ‘woke’ enough so they resort to calling out other netizens for past misdeeds. *They are the starting point of ‘cancel culture’.*

As per Merriam-Webster Dictionary’s definition, “*Cancel culture is the practice or tendency of engaging in mass canceling as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure*”. It doesn’t sound good in any way and worse is that it’s getting pretty rampant in social communities.

Netizens may find the situation intriguing and others consider it engaging (most probably because we are indeed lacking some social drama through the pandemic). Nevertheless, it’s not the only solution to educate someone or for you to find entertainment. A 3-hour exposure on what userABC did in 2014 that she/he/they has/have already worked on and has/have shown evidence of change is not the best activity to put your efforts in.

The stress that cancel culture inflicts on us, the users of various social media applications, is unnecessary especially in an era when we’re adjusting to a new definition of normalcy. What would veto do to the victims of ‘cancel culture’? Would just isolation from the crowd allow the ‘canceled people’ to learn from what blunders they made? Our world has flourished and millions of connections have been made. The varying perspectives of a diverse community is what makes us different from others in this orb. Betty Hart articulated in her Tedx Talk, “*I’ve changed and if I’m able to change, shouldn’t I extend the grace to believe that others can change, too?*”

So instead of going around the internet and canceling people, let’s not forget the fact that they’re humans and they also deserve the right to be educated and to learn and not to be exposed and shamed. Because a distant, mean, despicable *them* can be who we become— the best way to prevent that inclination is to be able to rationalize and filter our ideas before clicking ‘post’.

## 2022: Our First Social Media Election

by: John Anthony S. Luna

*“The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.”*  
-Winston Churchill

To say that social media is big in the Philippines would be an understatement of magnitudes. As of 2021, there were 78.5 million users (out of a population of 111 million) , a figure which would have certainly skyrocketed during the lockdowns. Facebook single-handedly controls roughly 80% of the total market share. The great hero Rizal called the youth the future, but reading the comment sections of anything political I’ve never been more thankful for not being allowed to vote. The rise of the internet allowed mainstream media’s hold over information to be broken. Indeed, online polls show that Filipinos trust social media more than the ‘traditional’ news. Despite the internet allowing alternative media to challenge the dominant narratives, it isn’t without its flaws. Its best aspect, as well as its worst, is the fact it’s so accessible.

2022 will perhaps be the first since 1986 where the election is a two-way race. In spite of the many candidates, only two really matter, Bongbong Marcos and Leni Robredo. I’m sure you have your own opinions of them. As observers have described it, this will be our first ‘social media election’, as the internet becomes the new battleground amidst the lockdowns. While not as polarized as American politics, we are quickly approaching parity, with politicians being able to mobilize their supporters whether it be showing up for a real rally or storming their opponent’s posts. President Duterte himself admitted to having his own online army. Paid shills and bots, of course, aren’t nearly as entertaining as real people engaging in back-and-forth flame wars.

It’s no psychological secret that we people are natural conformists and rarely, if ever, ‘form our own opinions’. Since social media incentivizes craving for validation and attention online, many teenagers online wind up posting about topics they know nothing about and wouldn’t have otherwise cared for had it not been a trend. Thanks to globalization, we now have to care about the affairs of other countries (especially the United States). Their issues which often have absolutely nothing to do with us become our concerns. Considering all the disturbing trends people would do for dopamine, it’s not difficult to imagine its impact on the increasingly politically conscious younger generations. Moreover, people think they’re immune from propaganda and it’s only the ‘other side’ being manipulated. Deception, however, transcends political affiliations. They also take advantage of people’s innate want not to seek the truth but confirmation of what they already believe. After all, are you really comfortable with the thought that your entire worldview which you are accustomed to is actually wrong? Most people aren’t, and this is why people fall into echo chambers online.

What’s equally woeful is that many of the people who spread falsehood do it in good faith, not realizing it. We also cannot discount the fact that terms like ‘conspiracy theory’ and ‘fake news’ have been labels used to discredit inconvenient narratives even if they have merit. Fake news can mean whatever people want it to mean. Satire is another victim of the political landscape, and there are plenty of instances when posts that were clearly jokes get perceived as real. As someone who’s really into satire and irony, it’s really disappointing that we cannot make jokes anymore without someone thinking it’s serious. Politics is information warfare. Although it’s unfortunate that this is the nature of elections today, we must be pragmatic with the ‘new normal’. Moderating ‘misinformation’ online has so far been counterproductive. Facebook, rather hilariously partnered with Rappler to crack down on misinformation and disinformation. The joke writes itself.

I suppose the takeaway from this article is the importance of always asking questions, and recognizing that no one is immune to propaganda. The next time you see an overly-sensationalized news post, question what the possible motive would be in writing it. There are countless warmongering Filipino channels that make videos as if China will invade any second now. While this article was not intended to be an argument against democracy, we must discuss its worst aspect; the fact that it’s dictated by a majority that could be manipulated. Democracies, after all have historically been conditional as it relies on voters being well-informed to make the right decisions. In many old democracies, the right to vote had to be earned. Not even the revolutionaries of the First Philippine Republic granted the ordinary masses the right to vote, restricting it exclusively among the ilustrados. Ironically, we, the people, have less power, as our politicians have a tendency to actually do what they promised when it threatens their chances of electability. Politics is a messy affair, one which I genuinely wish I didn’t have to care about. We must, however, engage in it if we want to influence the future of the Philippines. This is how it has to be.



## The Toxic Side of Fashion: Overconsumption, Real-Time Fashion, and Modern Slavery

by: Gweneth D. Dizon

### The history of garment manufacturing

Before the creation of ready-made garments, the elite class defined fashion statements that emphasized their wealth and power: big gowns, big hair, fancy hats, working shoes, ruffled collars, and tight corsets—everything was designed with intricate details and made from expensive textiles such as organic cotton, silk, and wool. However, these trends became accessible after the invention of the sewing machine in 1830. *“For the first time in history... the demand for store-bought clothing rose among the lower classes,”* Levi Hildebrand said from a YouTube video. Due to this, garment production was commercialized, thus leading to the establishment of clothing factories—which commenced the vicious cycle of clothing manufacturing. It is basic economics: by adapting the law of demand and supply, we already know that an equally high demand and supply results in lower prices.

This consumption behavior extended to the 1990s when a New York Times article labeled the retail brand Zara ‘fast fashion’ because of how quickly they made clothes. H&M also hopped on the fast fashion bandwagon and was quoted as ‘Chic to pay less’ by the same American newspaper. Back in those days, they praised the performances of these brands; no one knew that the underworld would knock on their doors. Unfortunately, it is difficult to maintain a retail brand; these physical shops struggled to pay for utility expenses, product transportation, and salaries, which led to the closure of multiple storefronts all over the world.

When the Internet became more comprehensive and advanced, online shops such as ASOS dominated most of the globe. They adopted what was called ultra-fast fashion. Then, fashion industries realized that ultra-fast fashion was not quick enough. So, more rapid than ever, real-time fashion rose; people discovered something cheaper, faster, and easier—which is Shein.

### Slow, fast, ultra-fast, and real-time fashion

Sustainability is the new talk in town, and most people think that you are only sustainable if you buy from slow fashion brands. Slow fashion, most known as sustainable fashion, is made from top-quality materials that may last you a lifetime; it can even be a family heirloom! However, it is more expensive than the garments seen in conventional shops, and it is most likely inaccessible. Costly is not overpriced in this case because it is allocated to textiles, shipping, customs, duties, taxes, and salaries of designers, (for marketing) photographers, models, makeup artists, and hairstylists. Concisely—people need to get paid.

Not everyone has the luxury to purchase slow fashion. The fashion industry adjusts to the needs and wants of the consumers, so fast fashion was born. There are no significant differences between fast, ultra-fast, and real-time fashion; it is just the speed of manufacturing clothes.

Shein, a real-time fashion brand, uses powerful algorithms to predict fashion trends; the only way Shein produces fast products for a cheap price is by not paying workers and by not following environmental laws. Wu Peiyue, one of the few journalists who investigated Shein production sites, said: *“They have to hire a lot of temporary workers... The issue is [they are] not in [China’s] social welfare system.”*

Sweatshops from mainland China are not the only victims of this fast fashion catastrophe. Arif Jebtik, a factory owner from Bangladesh, said: *“Every day, [fashion retailers] are hampering me, and I am hampering my workers—that is how it is.”* Fast fashion increases the social devaluation of clothes and labor because they always aim to sell garments at a lower price; *“If you can make that [target price], you’re getting business. Otherwise, you are not getting [any],”* Arif adds. Shima Akhter, one of the garment workers, shared her experiences: *“When I first started working in a garment factory, my salary was \$10 a month.”* This low-wage manufacturing company does not only affect their laborers financially, but it can also cost hundreds of lives. For example, the collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013 killed 1,134 and injured 2,500 people. John Hilary, the executive director of War on Want, said: *“They’d already pointed out that the building was structurally unsafe, and yet they’d been forced back in.”* Moreover, a fire broke out in Ali Enterprises (289 dead) and Tazreen Fashion (112 dead) in the same year, 2012.

### Sustainability is not classist. You can be sustainable in many ways.

It is difficult to win in the sustainability debate. One of the most famous rebuttals is *“Sustainable fashion promotes classism. Not everyone can buy them.”* I agree, even I cannot buy a \$150 ushanka from Pangaia.

The root of the problem is excessive consumerism: In the United States, 11.9 billion tonnes of clothes are dumped annually. In the United Kingdom, 50% of fast fashion clothing items are thrown out after only a year, and an American throws an average of 37 kilograms of clothes annually. We have to observe our consumption behavior and evaluate whether we are being responsible shoppers or reckless shopaholics. We can maximize our wardrobe, experiment by mix-and-matching, and study what fits best for our bodies. *“The most environmentally sustainable [clothing] is the one that is already in your closet,”* Patagonia’s Chief Product Officer, Lisa Williams, said.

Appreciate what you already have and take care of it: keep an eye on the washing instructions specified, and when it is losing its shape or appeal, learn how to upcycle them! Upcycling is the fusion of upgrading and recycling your clothes—transforming them into something better in terms of your style. We are in the information age; almost every educational material is accessible simply by a few taps and flicks of a finger.

If you feel the need to buy new pieces, ensure their quality from stitches, thickness, zippers, buttons, to fabric patterns. Do the pull test: gently pull and release it to check if it retains its shape or if the material looks altered. *“[If we stop buying poor quality], it will allow us to keep our clothes longer, which is good for our wallets and the environment,”* an article from Sustain Your Style said. The Philippines is famous for its ukay-ukay, they are directly similar to thrift shops. It is not a new concept—I’m sure that at least one of you had a firsthand experience with second-hand clothing.

Overall, fast fashion is a constant; we cannot eradicate it. Ecological and societal concerns are impacted by sustainability: from the protection of natural resources to ensure human and societal wellbeing. As individuals, our greatest contribution now is avoidance and self-control by managing and improving what we already have. Become responsible consumers, and open our eyes to reality. Fashion industries are run by our demands, they might just shift their business ethics someday soon.



Taken from: "TikTok is Kind of Bad for Fashion" by Mina Le on YouTube

### DID YOU KNOW?

The fashion industry is responsible for 8% of carbon emissions.

UN Environment





## The Future of Fashion: The Fabricant Studio and DressX

by: Gweneth D. Dizon

Are you willing to replace your physically manufactured clothes with the newly introduced simulated fashion? It is promised by the virtual world that you get to be anybody you want! As Mark Zuckerberg said: *"The future is about being able to do almost everything you can imagine... [and] express yourself in new, joyful, completely immersive ways."*

Since the beginning of the 21st century, technology has been rapidly developing; it has made our communities more convenient and has built bridges between nations. Now, the launch of Metaverse comes with virtual augmented reality; it is like playing The Sims in real life—we can manipulate the way we look and control the way we present ourselves. Therefore, digital fashion brands such as The Fabricant Studio and DressX find this as an opportunity to serve the netizens with what they want.

The Fabricant Studio is a virtual fashion house based in Amsterdam, Netherlands. It subscribes to the notion of *'showing the world that clothing does not need to be physical to exist'*. On their website, it is seen that they collaborated with big brands such as Adidas, Buffalo London, Under Armour, Puma, and Tommy Hilfiger; they brought Digi-couture to Australian Fashion Week with partnerships with Toni Matceviski (fashion designer), Amplify (branding agency), and Afterpay (buy now, pay later platform). They sell their clothing or auction in a form of non-fungible tokens (NFTs), a type of blockchain technology. They believe that it is an *'enabler for a more democratic, connected and valuable way of creating digital fashion experiences'*. Unfortunately, it may cost up to \$9,500 yet they said, *"By 2025, 100 million people will be metaverse-ready by wearing digital garments minted in The Fabricant Studio."*

DressX, on the other hand, is currently accessible to everyone; it can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. With their vision *'Don't shop less, shop digital fashion.'*, they promote DressX as a digital closet where new looks are readily available for free or as NFTs. It can be worn in the Metaverse, online games, social media, video calls, and live streams. It also pledged to *'create garments of the future that eliminate waste and chemicals during production, and minimize carbon footprint'*.

Digital fashion is more than just a matter of dress-up. Rather, it is a means of transferring emotions in a new world of evolving humanity. A garment's fit and shape can no longer come down to genetics because data looks good on everybody. Fashion has always been on par with our identity, and it is the media that will allow us to realize our true selves in the future. Amani Abdallah, a fashion news reporter, wrote: *"You can be braver, more gorgeous, more aggressive, [and greener]; change gender, age, [and race]."* By the time the metaverse starts to manifest its promise, we will be beyond age, gender, and ethnicity.

PASSION

PRACTICALITY



## Factors to Consider When Choosing a Career: Passion or Practicality

by: Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

Time marches on and so will several batches of students on the anticipated completion rites. Everyone is another year closer to deciding on a career, so it is reasonable for many to feel overwhelmed about having to make the 'right' choice, worried about disappointing their parents, troubled about getting into a course, or even unsettled about having no strong feelings about any choice at all. Who wouldn't be? We will be spending a third of our lives working for the sustenance of our needs and wants. Everyone dreams of having a success story to tell. While there are a lot of factors that come into play when considering an occupation; it commonly boils down to two factors: passion and practicality.

If you are among the many who have yet to have an idea, consider what Mrs. Teresa V. Garcia, IPSA's Guidance Counselor, advises you to do and evaluate yourself. The first piece of advice includes understanding yourself and your personality, which she defines as the totality of your traits. Which among those traits can get you somewhere? Which trait aligns with your interests? This takes us to the second. What are your interests? What are the things that you take pleasure in? This is the part where you start seeking actual options that, again, align with your traits. The third, being skills, involves understanding your strengths and weaknesses. The third part is not merely your likes and dislikes, but it also involves being realistic with the potential that you have. The advantage you have at this stage is that you aren't torn between passion or practicality because you can come up with options that include both.

If, however, you do have options but struggle with deciding what weighs more between passion and practicality then take Mrs. Garcia's judgment on the two. For starters, passion may not bring success at all times. I know, it is quite a hard pill to swallow. In choosing a career, passion is not enough and so are talent and ambition. She mentioned, *"Misguided or ignorant passion can lead to shattered hopes and dreams."* Your passion needs to be able to put food on the table. This should also keep you excited for years. What some people consider their passion today may not necessarily remain their passion in the years to come, especially when other priorities of life take over.

This is when practicality and being realistic make a grand entrance. Although passion won't always lead to success because success, for a lot of people, is partly about money, she suggests that both factors can co-exist; that it is not a matter of 'or' but a matter of 'and'. Our Guidance Counselor affirmed that passion is the soul while practicality is the body. One will fuel you while the other will support you. Practicality will take you from A to B. Passion might take you beyond Z. Practicality introduces you to reality while passion helps you recreate reality. She, however, discouraged following passions inspired by one-in-a-million success stories as these aren't bound to be for everyone.

Though, according to her, success may vary from person to person. So, follow your own definition of success. After all, some have trouble coming up with a decision because they consider others' definitions of success. To be successful is to be fulfilled, even if you are accomplished in the eyes of many, if you don't feel it within you then you will never feel satisfied. Before making a decision, it is therefore crucial that you check and evaluate your values, recognize your true potential and passion, and regard practicality. Remember that you aren't a failure or 'damaged goods' if you find yourself a sense of purpose.



## What To Do In Your 15-Minute Breaks

by: Sharmaine Abigail Q. Mendiola

With our limited-time daily, are you maximizing yours? Do you compromise your well-being for work and other personal activities? Based on experience, I would always have my *to-do list* loaded with weeks worth of tasks, and there would not be a week of peace. That was an exhausting cycle, though I was more tired of my brain running on caffeine and needing to solve mathematical equations first thing in the morning. With the S.Y. 2021-2022 of the International Philippine School in Al Khobar coming to an end, it is in your best interest to study well, ace as many tests as possible, and finish the year strong. As someone who struggled in keeping up with deadlines, I shall let you in on a secret!

The Pomodoro Technique is an effective time-management method. This approach was developed during the late 1980s or early 1990s by a university student named Francesco Cirillo. Traditionally, you work in 25-minute segments divided by 5-minute breaks. Once you have done four Pomodoro cycles, a 15-minute-long break follows. The Pomodoro technique is 100% customizable according to your schedule and preference. It does not only encourage productivity but also increases self-discipline and focus. Furthermore, it prompts you to work with the available time rather than against it.

With the similarities between the long breaks in the Pomodoro Technique and the transition periods, I asked around about what other students do during those times. According to Cindy A. Bugagon, a student from Grade 7-Prudent, she usually scrolls through her phone or accomplishes activities. If her next class has a test, she reviews it. She gathers her books and organizes her school supplies as well. She uttered, *"These activities don't really feel healthy, but at the same time, I don't want to change the activities I perform."* She followed this with, *"I do recommend checking your Google classrooms to see if you have anything to prepare for beforehand. I don't really see anything wrong with using your phone during 15-minute breaks, so if students do that, it's best for them to let them be."*

Julian Eriel T. Julio of Grade 10-Fortitude said that he usually does some exercise or gets out of his room to relax his eyes from looking at the monitor. It makes him calm and frees his mind and body from stress. Meanwhile, Josienne Elysha D. Magbanua of Grade 9-Upright does multiple activities during the 15-minute screen breaks. These activities include but are not limited to using the comfort room, getting a snack or a drink, preparing her things for the next class, or simply laying down to hopefully regain energy. She noted, *"These activities usually make me feel like I'm prepared for the next subject, secure, content, and energized. These also help me relax and get rid of some worries and things to think about."* And just like the majority of the students of IPSA, she ultimately uses this time to *'become more attentive and energized for the next class'*.

The transition period is time to rest or prepare yourself for the next study session. With the answers of our fellow students, I have come up with a list of activities you may do during the 15-minute breaks! A power nap will help you feel refreshed and recharged. Just make sure to have an alarm set, or ask someone to wake you up to avoid over napping. I am sure most of us had this kind of experience where a 15-minute nap had turned into a 5-hour sleep. If that kind of scenario scares you, meditation is the way to go. Enter into a quiet and comfortable room, and from there, focus on breathing, and have a little self-reflection. You can also include small stretches during this time.

A more exhilarating way to boost your energy is to fill up your stomach and rehydrate. The possibilities here are endless, whip up a fast and easy home-cooked meal or grab a juice box from your refrigerator to taste the tropical sweetness. You may also brew coffee for that stimulating shot of caffeine. A glass of water with ice cubes and a hint of lemon juice can do the trick! Either way, what matters here is to replenish your stamina. Although based on personal experience, the 15-minute screen breaks are too short to be preparing a snack. A simple toasted bread or cooking up a hot repast takes the whole 15 minutes, so make sure to keep track of the time.

During the break, you can also stay away from all screens. We use technology for almost everything, so it is critical to be mindful of our patterns and screen time. Doctors recommend the 20-20-20 rule, that for every twenty minutes in front of a screen, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. You can do some small talk and catch up with your family members, or get creative, sketch all your ideas out or write in your journal.

Another entertaining way to kill time is to sweat. Playing with your pet is enough to get a good laugh and help you relieve those underlying stress. And as silly as this may sound, you can also wear your earbuds and dance! Groove with the beat of your favorite artist, or do light stretches or yoga poses.

If you lose focus quickly, keep those brain juices flowing during the transition period. Utilize the 15-minute break to plan and regroup. It is my go-to activity because even if it is a break, I can re-evaluate the priorities in my to-do list, check and reorganize my schedules, declutter my workspace, and so much more! Cleaning your workspace and arranging your files is better than stressing out on that science homework during the quick break.

These are my favorite ways to pass the time, though, of course, you are free to experiment and explore to find out which activities work for you. Even if it is crucial to ace your tests and study thoroughly to receive good marks, it is more important to prioritize your overall well-being. It is more important to keep your work and personal life balanced. Taking a little bit of your time to breathe cannot hurt because nothing good can come from procrastination and overworking yourself.

## Three Lessons to Keep from the Pandemic

by: Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

As the pandemic shoves us into our homes, time slips through our fingers like sand through an hourglass, but gravity isn't as strong as it seems, and the days pass without any difference. Now that it's been two years and everything is starting to subside, have you ever noticed a clear dichotomy between how everything was before the pandemic hit and now? It seems like change was hard to keep track of as it took place subtly. There might be some things you've overlooked when you were going through it:

- 1. You were fast-paced the whole time.** The world moves fast but you move faster. The pandemic was the slowdown sign. The hassle and the rush that the busy lifestyle made us conform to made us quite tight. The pandemic isn't necessarily a good event but it did help us gradually depart from the speedy convention of a daily routine that we used to adhere to, helping us realize that there isn't a need for a hasty lifestyle as a means of productivity.
- 2. Being materialistic won't help you at all.** The virus isn't picking people from a class or a caste—neither wealth nor class determines health. Instead of investing in the 'lavish lifestyle', you should invest in being practical. There is no problem with indulging in luxury, just not at the expense of needs.
- 3. Your home is your sanctuary.** You spent so much time outside that you've forgotten the warmth only your home can give. Whatever takes the shape of a home to you, for as long as you find comfort in it, you must cherish it. Finding a true haven is as rare as the most valuable of coins. Health is wealth, but so are the people who genuinely care for you.

Keep these lessons like you would with treasures. Make sure you don't come out of the pandemic with nothing; the pandemic has caused us so much damage that we should maybe use what we've learned. The pandemic made life seem far more valuable and too precious to lose. It reminded us to live life like there's no tomorrow, but not in a careless and carefree sense.





## Changes for the Future: The 5th Science Fair

by: Miranda Juris P. Laxa

A huge hall filled with students—some stand and practice lines in their heads in preparation, while others fidget with their hands and move around anxiously; they stand next to a display made from weeks of research, days of experiments and analysis, and a whole night's worth of perfecting the design—a standard picture of IPSA's Science Fair... pre-COVID, that is. The two school years of online and hybrid classes continue to show us that things are different now, and we are more than ever reminded of this in the month-long journey of our 5th Science Fair that concluded on March 31, 2022.

Just how much has changed? Well, in the trying times of this pandemic, tri-fold displays transitioned into PowerPoint presentations, instead of standing next to your competitors, waiting for the judges to arrive at your station, you wait in the Zoom breakout room. The difference was clear to us as a video presentation was played before the program began, showing different posters of this event throughout the years, starting from the 2019 Science Fair. It also showed us what we are to expect for this year's fair, stating that we solve, innovate and invent because we learn and discover. It may be a saddening scene, the thrill of the face-to-face event transitioning into an online setting—but in the midst of this, we can still find joy within the unfamiliarities.

Our Masters of Ceremony: Aliyah A. Motas and Samuel G. Cerbito (Grade 8-Reliable) officially started the day's program. As our theme says: *'Challenges Meet Problem Solvers (CHAMPS): Gearing Up for Changes'*.

IPSANs have shown that we truly are champs in preparing ourselves for the changes pushed onto us, no matter the alteration. Mr. Ricky C. Enriquez said in his opening remarks: *"This event intends to develop the critical and creative thinking skills to adapt to a changing world."* Indeed, IPSA steadfastly enacts the vision it holds for its learners. We, as little scientists and problem solvers, are now geared up for those changes as we have continuously been, during the COVID-19 school setting.

In this program, we were graciously joined by Mr. Jerome Monroe P. Bernadino, our guest speaker. Mr. Bernadino is no stranger to change, all the way from being a student in IPSA to graduating Cum Laude with a BS Biology degree in the University of the Philippines, into taking his Master of Science in Biocontrol Solutions for Plant Health Degree at the University of Côte d'Azur and the University of Paris-Saclay in France. He began by introducing the title of his talk: *'Scientific thinking at the driver's seat: its roles and significance in steering a thesis.'*

Mr. Bernadino aimed to show the relevance of thinking scientifically when conducting research. An introduction that began with the *Case of the Lost Face Mask* explained how scientific thinking works. Proceeding on elucidating the scientific method, and how it is applied to said case. Showing us that scientific thinking and the scientific method are used in our day-to-day lives, to help us answer problems. We were then able to explore his current research called the *'Characterization of long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs) involved in lateral root development.'* Going deeper into this, you would feel nothing but awe of the visual representation of his hard work and efforts.

After showcasing his research, he expanded the application of scientific thinking and the scientific method in pursuit of this. Mr. Bernadino ended his most insightful talk with key takeaways from the discussion.

In all endeavors we encounter, whether in a science laboratory or in our daily lives, the problem solvers of IPSA will apply the knowledge of scientific thinking and the method. As his talk ended—similar to the first step of the scientific method we asked questions—a vital part of all scientific findings.

The program didn't end there, as we cannot forget the superlative efforts of the students who will soon be rewarded with the results of the contest.

Mrs. Jennifer M. Rosanes explained the mechanics of all three contests: **Slogan-Making Contest, Poster-Making Contest, and Problem Solvers Challenge**, all of which are open to all Junior High School students. Succeeding this was the presentation of the judges done by Ms. Hannah F. Obusan.

The Slogan-Making Contest's judges were Ms. Kimberly C. Buella, Ms. Katherine E. Gajasan, Mrs. Victoria S. Guinto, Mr. Jesus L. Guinto Jr., Mrs. Lenit A. Tampac, and Mr. Romer S. Gobuyan, followed by the panel of judges for the Poster-Making Contest: Mr. Christopher T. Sotelo, Ms. Maleorene R. Darping, Mr. John Kennedy B. Rumbaua, Mrs. Thelma A. Ilas, Mr. Leonardo M. Collado, Mr. Ted Evan H. Gallano, Mr. Patrick M. Cristobal, and Mr. Maribon P. Rovillos. Lastly were the judges of the Problem Solvers Challenge: Mrs. Rowena R. Capulong, Mrs. Leliane C. Guansing, Mr. Darwin S. Majid, Ms. Shaima S. Majid, Mr. John Randolph O. Tiongzon, Mrs. Arlene B. Adducul, and Mrs. Obusan, herself. We are ever grateful for these judges and their efforts to choose the worthy winners.

The awarding of the certificate to the winners was done by Ms. Pearl Celine F. Fabregas, our school Vice Principal for Academics. Through the changing times, a reaction to an achievement stays the same. As the contest winners were announced, our once quiet classroom was filled with an uproar of excitement; you didn't need to go face-to-face to feel the support—the Zoom chat was filled with congratulations. Like the last step in the scientific method, our program came to its conclusion as Mrs. Adducul gave her closing remarks. Mrs. Adducul stated, *"May this activity set the tone for our future endeavors."* Another brick into the foundation that IPSA is helping us build for our future.

Change—an evident focus of this year's Science Fair. But isn't that exactly what Science is? It is a change that may not always be easily accepted and may be different from the things we are accustomed to. Science is innovation in correspondence to the ever-growing world. We, IPSANs, have heartily shown through this year's event, that we will be part of the innovations and changes of the future—as we continue to grow from the knowledge we acquire from the changes in the present world.

### POSTER-MAKING CONTEST WINNERS

#### GRADE 7

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G7-GALLANT

Chloe Ciara Charlyze D. Aguilera

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G7-Prudent

Ynersya Kassandra A. Velonta

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G7-RIGHTEOUS

Isolde M. Inductivo

##### CHAMPION:

G7-Valiant

Berdine Nathania R. Cual

#### GRADE 8

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G8-Humility

Francheska Margarette L. Peña

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G8-Trustworthy

Erin Xandrine Alvana P. Israel

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G8-Noble

Bernadette C. Perez

##### CHAMPION:

G8-Humility

Jeremy Joel R. Gido

#### GRADE 9

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G9-Piety

Krystel Chloe M. Esteron

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G9-Upright

Kristel V. Cruz

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G9-Modest

Faith Jamilla F. Alpuente

##### CHAMPION:

G9-Piety

Khaimira U. Castro

#### GRADE 10

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G10-Dependable

Jander Maverick C. Bareng

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G10-Dependable

Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G10-Fortitude

Denniree Faith I. Mojene

##### CHAMPION:

G10-Virtuous

Janinia Velle Angelika O. Villena

### SLOGAN-MAKING CONTEST WINNERS

#### GRADE 7

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G7-VALIANT

Yuan Mikhail Jirelle DR. Cruz

Angel Faith A. Tongol

Rebecca Jaymae C. Ibay

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G7-RIGHTEOUS

Kassandra Anika D. Maderazo

Davynne Archilyn P. Diones

Aisha L. Pedines

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G7-RIGHTEOUS

Isolde M. Inductivo

Rihanna Fatima A. Shihab

Jassim J. Bahjin

Jhonard Cyle A. Deniega

##### CHAMPION:

G7-GALLANT

Chloe Ciara Charlyze D. Aguilera

Mikaella E. Custodio

Micael Ver P. Rendon

#### GRADE 8

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G8-Trustworthy

Aldous Joaquin J. Usi

Fernando C. Morillo Jr.

Justin Ranel F. Faculin

John Isaac P. Nepomuceno

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G8-Humility

Jeremy Joel R. Gido

Victorino T. Tibe II

Ralph Wade J. Fedelin

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G8-Noble

Ameenah T. Argarin

Juliana Denise V. Ybañez

Refaiah Lauriz N. Abarquez

##### CHAMPION:

G8-Noble

Ashleen B. Fronda

Jem Aicelle T. Rivera

Sky Theodore P. Mendoza

#### GRADE 9

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G9-PIOUS

Jezreel Rogelle A. Aguilar

Alleine Margaret A. Alcasabas

Kristine C. Tambauan

Meri Sophia S. Piguig

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G9-Modest

Garij Christopher S. Antonio

Faith Jamilla F. Alpuente

Nyah Franz R. De La Cruz

Sharlene Antionette D. Brondo

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G9-Upright

Zuriel Chloe D. Calma

Kristel V. Cruz

Jameela P. Insail

Sian Ryver A. De Honor

##### CHAMPION:

G9-Piety

Ludy Lou H. Arbis

Precious Avi Nady D. Manipon

Rana C. Patricio

Maleah Louise C. Noche

#### GRADE 10

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G10-Virtuous

Alessandra Isabelle M. Abacan

Icy T. Sigua

Janinia Velle Angelika O. Villena

Blesscelda Ymari L. Bambao

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G10-Diligent

Ehra Gail P. Dizon

Athena Johane M. Eusebio

Ruth Yhsabel A. Sanchez

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G10-Diligent

Abdulrauf I. Ahari

Rainier S. Ceniza

Adam C. Khundokar

##### CHAMPION:

G10-Dependable

Izellah Rae B. Beo

Venice Gwen R. Renolayan

Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

Alleia Marielle C. Villanueva

### PROBLEM SOLVERS CHALLENGER WINNERS

#### GRADE 7

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G7-Valiant

Eldrik A. Solomon

Napthali Luther C. Flores

Lancelot Alistair A. Surrea

Ali A. Rigos

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G7-Gallant

Mary Divine Reine D. Batara

Rojan Joaquin G. Agagon

Dereck Johanz C. Edquillane

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G7-RIGHTEOUS

Kassandra Anika D. Maderazo

Davynne Archilyn P. Diones

Aisha L. Pedines

##### CHAMPION:

G7-Gallant

Margaret C. Mallare

Gabrielle A. Bermejo

Abigail Nicole T. Heineck

#### GRADE 8

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G8-Trustworthy

Aldous Joaquin J. Usi

Justin Ranel F. Faculin

Fernando C. Morillo Jr.

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G8-Reliable

Samuel Gabriel G. Cerbito

Charles Niko A. Quero

Margaux Ethan T. Rabang

Elmer John M. Villa

Daniel David Allyn P. Diones

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G8-Reliable

Amjad M. Abdulmajid

Christine Noelle L. Ingco

Euan Sean T. Dia

##### CHAMPION:

G8-Humility

Hannah C. Dela Vega

Sarina P. Letoille

Elisha Mae L. Cueto

Aislinn Aiyanna V. Nolasco

#### GRADE 9

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G9-Modest

Helen T. Villarmo

Nyah Franz R. De La Cruz

Sharlene Antoinette D. Brondo

Nina Patriz B. Batac

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G9-Modest

Alexus Mathew P. Arrieta

Ayesha Cayenne D. Placido

Chloe T. Araya

Francisco F. Payumo III

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G9-Piety

Xymunn Karlo P. Algerre

Kody Jed Tyron D. Maderazo

Ramon Rodrigo R. Ramos

##### CHAMPION:

G9-Upright

Harry Gabriel G. Ilagan

Jairus E. Eledia

Andrew Aints K. Pelonia

#### GRADE 10

##### 3rd Runner-Up:

G10-Diligent

Zoe Angelie D. Dalangin

Rhean Denise P. Donal

##### 2nd Runner-Up:

G10-Dependable

Jannah D. Balasbas

Trixie Marie B. Casingal

Rachelle Zaira L. Santos

Lian Jizel F. Simpao

##### 1st Runner-Up:

G10-Dependable

Mohammad Rayan M. Balindong

Joseph Tom G. Coloma

Yaseen P. Smith

##### CHAMPION:



## IPSA Alumnus on His Journey to Applied Civil Engineering

by: Sharmaine Abigail Q. Mendiola

Being able to roam and see the ins and outs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an exhilarating activity. Some might even say 'mind-blowing' as their eyes observe the lines of buildings alongside the highways filled with cars divided by beds of flowers. Traveling and seeing the plans and designs of architects created into a physical form by engineers is amusing. But, being a part of the creation process and feeling millions admiring your work is gratifying. Honestly, no words can equate to the sensation of success, gratitude, and security after completing a project.

IPSA Alumnus and King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals Applied Civil Engineering Graduate, Ameer Saad M. Al Shobaiki was raised in Saudi Arabia. He traveled with his family and relatives around the country for as long as he remembers. He loved to get out, see, and learn about the different gorgeous locations and cultures of various regions of the Kingdom.

His parents were a crucial part of his student life since they continuously encouraged him to do better and do good while working. *"As they always say, pray, work honestly, and work hard. They consistently motivated me to aim for the best, however, not to expect too much but to be hopeful that what is best for me will come to me."*

Just like any other student of IPSA, his favorite memories from his days as an IPSAn were him partaking in our annual school events like the Mini-Olympics, Student Council Mini-Fair, Year-End Winter Parties, and IPSA Foundation Day. According to him, *"What makes these memories memorable is that we normally have fewer classes than usual for almost two months, and we get to have more time to bond with our friends and our teachers."* And I agree with him. Although the entire community is busy preparing props and performances, these are the days we rest from class discussions and schoolwork.

His fondness for traveling had developed into an appreciation for the captivating facilities and establishments in Saudi Arabia. He desired to be a part of making the country 'look more aesthetic' so that individuals could relish traveling more than he does. Another deciding aspect that helped him lock his mind on engineering is his father. He grew up witnessing his father handle major projects and toil in the real estate industry. His father continually amazes him as he is still working on and receiving countless projects.

Besides his father and his passion for traveling, he values his major since it enriches his communication, critical thinking, creativity, project management, and leadership skills. Mr. Al Shobaiki said, *"In engineering, especially civil engineering, safety and cost in constructing a structure are very important, so minimizing mistakes is a must."* He dislikes his major as it demands to have minimal to no mistakes at all. Think of it as a few inches off, and everything will come tumbling down!

Having the opportunity to study at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals was nothing less than amazing despite its lack of extracurricular activities. As expected from a world-renowned university, especially in engineering, they only accept the top 6% of the country. They concentrated more on academics and research. He said, *"I am very thankful to have been admitted and graduated from such a university."*

He continued, *"As any student, I experienced difficulties during my stay at the university. They came from the beginning of my university life when I had to get used to the new environment, a new way of teaching, and new people from different backgrounds and cultures. And how exactly did I overcome this? I just told myself that this is only the beginning, and eventually, I will get used to it. And it did, finally, in some days, I'd be looking for some academic pressure myself."*

Mr. Al Shobaiki could not have done it on his own; he is most grateful first to Allah for guiding him throughout his five-year journey in completing his major. The second would be his family, especially his parents because they thoroughly supported him through his ups and downs. Next would be his friends that stuck with him through the bright and stressful times while studying. And finally, to his professors and mentors for conveying their understanding and knowledge. And also guiding him to become better in the field! These are the people he expresses his most genuine gratitude for being present every step of his journey.

Learning does not stop on graduation day. According to him, *there were too many life lessons*, but if there is one worth sharing with students, it would be that: *Everyone is going through different things, so whatever comes to you, whether it may be good or bad, go with it. However, pray & work honestly with the intention of good and hope for the best.*

Most of us exercised at our homes and played video games during quarantine. Mr. Al Shobaiki was no different from us as these activities gave him peace. On top of that, he had a constant conversation with his family and friends, whether in person or online, this gave him immense joy. And although occupied with his undertakings, he gladly left noteworthy tips for IPSAns who plan to pursue engineering. He urges you to look at things that require engineering and start asking what's and why's since this straightforward action enhances your critical and creative thinking. He said that it is beneficial to focus on the basics of your education. If not most, everything taught in school will be the foundation of the theories and formulas utilized in engineering.

## The Guidance Counselor's Persuasion in Subduing Fear of Failure

by: Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

In the wise words of Mrs. Teresa V. Garcia, our beloved and adored Guidance Counselor, we all have different definitions of failure simply because we all have different benchmarks, values, and belief systems. It affects the decisions we all make, the actions we take, and the outcomes we achieve. Who you are and what you do has, at one point or another, been influenced by fear. Though it is not necessarily detrimental as it is an innate emotion arising from when danger is perceived, it's only healthy to a certain point. Anything beyond that point might stunt one's growth. So, what do you do when fear of failure drives you and your brakes fail? How do you take it back when you give it leverage over everything?

First and foremost, she wants us to recognize that fear of failure can be immobilizing and debilitating. It can convince us to do nothing and therefore resist moving forward. This explains why many students and pupils resort to procrastinating and end up postponing their activities. If it's because of that fear that we are uncomfortable in setting goals, she wants us to ingrain a mentality that in everything we do, there is always a chance that we will fail. Facing that chance and embracing it is not only courageous, but also gives us a more rewarding life.

She also suggested that we choose to look for the lessons we're meant to learn. Failure may take a toll on us, but we can choose to take lessons from it. Not only will it bring us something to learn from, but it will also help us discover our truest friends and even help us find unexpected motivation to succeed. Oftentimes, valuable insights come only after a failure. Valuable insights are not to be found through foresight, but rather hindsight.

To be able to function despite the angst that comes with wanting to always succeed, she advises us to start setting small goals and taking one small step at a time. She says these should be slightly, but not overwhelmingly, challenging. She referred to it as 'early wins'. Babies have to learn how to walk first before they learn how to run. It is also a no-brainer that driving past the speeding limits is accepting the possibility of your car crashing and burning. So, taking it slow and moving according to your pace is the most efficient way to subdue it. You may take it slow and steady, so long that you are actually doing it. It is better than doing nothing at all. Without goals, we have no definite destination. This is the best time to learn how to evaluate all possible outcomes rationally and to develop contingency plans.

Finally, she reassures us that failure is not holding you back, fear of failure is. We are conditioned to fear failure as if the lack of failure guarantees success. The reality is that a lack of failure equals a lack of risk-taking, which is required for meaningful success. Learning the art of picking yourself up gracefully after falling from grace is one of the greatest skills you'll want to learn. Maybe it's time we treat failure as one of the highlights of our lives. One day we can all look back and tell our success stories.



## Science in the Lives of Grade School Pupils

by: Anne Rozel DG. Bernardino

Science is a subject that can be regarded as puzzling yet inarguably intriguing. This is not an exception for the young grade school pupils of IPSA—curious & innovative minds that are eager to learn and explore the world around them. *“To simply put the importance of learning Science to our pupils, let me make use of the abbreviation BTS [not the K-pop idols]. BTS stands for Breaking Through Science and Behind the Scene. Science value and impact lies not merely on the shadow of knowing and memorizing the facts, but there is more to it,”* said Sir Darwin S. Majid, a Science teacher in the Grade School Department. He continues to elaborate that *“Science is a dynamic body of knowledge, it’s ever changing, so what Science really teaches is to understand how such a dynamic body of knowledge works.”* Miss Hannah Lou F. Obusan, a former Science teacher of the Grade School Department who now teaches 9th grade Science, mentioned, *“Every day we see, smell, touch, taste, and hear Science. Learning about this subject will be giving us answers to the questions we are curious about.”*

Science, like many things, is seen differently from various perspectives, and students and teachers alike have varying thoughts regarding this subject. *“Science is an important subject, in my opinion. Science provides practical solutions to everyday problems and aids us in understanding the universe’s biggest mysteries,”* expressed Andreana F. Celedonio of Grade 6-Efficient. *“To put it another way, Science is one of the most essential sources of information,”* she added. Meanwhile, Arianna Jamilah Almario of the same grade said, *“I think Science is a very interesting subject to learn! There’s a lot of facts that are just somehow entertaining to learn.”*

One of the reasons Science is such an engulfing subject for young pupils is because it is an engaging one—full of fascinating Science projects and experiments. We’ve made ‘fire snakes’ from baking soda and sand, and cooked popcorn seeds in cans. *“The baking soda and vinegar balloon experiment was my favorite Science experiment. It was a fun experiment, and I discovered that when baking soda and vinegar are combined, something new emerges,”* said Andreana. Another pupil’s favorite experiment, namely Leda Camille Asi, was *“making simple solutions, such as salt-water. By the end I even added oil to the mixture as a sort of impromptu, which was very basic but fun nonetheless.”*

In the pursuit of Science and discovery, as well as nurturing the minds of pupils, our school conducts the Science Fair every year, and has been doing so since the year 2017, making this year’s Science Fair the 5th of its kind. Pupils first encounter the Science Investigatory Project (SIP) when they enter the 4th grade. Instead of having different performance tasks quarterly, pupils focus on the SIP as a year-round performance task. Since the establishment of the SIP in IPSA, students have investigated and experimented within the different fields of Science: from biology, to chemistry, to physics—some pupils have even taken it upon themselves to investigate topics that aren’t as mainstream, such as immunology like Jabeza Ellah Valeros who believes that her SIP can help increase the strength of the immune system. Some pupils have explored solutions to our day-to-day problems, and others have decided to research possible solutions to problems and dangers in our society, such as Timothy Jacob De Belen whose SIP is ‘a homemade taser used to protect ourselves’, and Ryz J. Medina, whose inspiration behind her SIP is ‘recycling and being more eco-friendly’.

According to Mr. Majid, *“the SIP is after individual benefits in undertaking learning with Science. It builds a powerful platform for a young learner to be a competent communicator, communicating their thoughts on making sense of the world around them—from developing their ability to formulate scientific questions, to testing simple ideas to solve such problems, by exploring the world around them and tackle some of its challenging questions and be a champion that meets to solve the challenging problems the world offers.”*

But what are our grade school pupils’ outlook on the SIP?

*“I think that the SIP is very engulfing, like you can’t get your mind to stop investigating once it starts to tick,”* said Camille. *“I enjoy the SIP because of the process of the whole project—from problem to conclusion.”* Ryz J. Medina said, *“I think the SIP is a very enjoyable learning experience, since it really allows you to take bits of information and analyze, examine, and investigate them as a whole or piece by piece.”*

Everything we see and don’t see are parts of a complex system, and are complex systems themselves. Science gives young pupils the opportunity to understand and grasp such a vast expanse of intricacies. Pupils get to explore questions and find solutions by themselves—an essential skill that requires curiosity and interest. It is valuable for young learners to retain these traits, that they may grow into productive and educated citizens of an ever-evolving society. And in the words of Ms. Obusan, *“Keep investigating, keep being curious, keep experimenting, keep researching. This will be your weapon on how you will be discovering and learning something new.”*



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 In 1928, Alexander Fleming accidentally discovered Penicillin, the first antibiotic in the world.  
 LegalZoom



Taken from: IPSA Gazette FB Page

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 Percy Spencer accidentally discovered that microwave ovens can heat food in 1945. The first food he cooked in it was popcorn.  
 Wonderopolis





## A Message to Ms. A

by: Mr. Michael C. Adducul

As School Year 2021-2022 is about to end, IPSA turns another chapter of its vaunted history with the imminent departure of our School Principal, Mrs. Liezel A. Aguilar, ending her almost ten tumultuous but scrupulous years of service to the IPSA community of students, parents, teachers, school personnel, and other stakeholders.

IPSA will be forever grateful to Mrs. Aguilar, better known as Ms. A, for the unselfish, dedicated, and exemplary service she dutifully rendered without any thought of hesitation to better serve the best interest of the learning institution since her arrival in 2012 spearheading one of the most challenging transition phase of IPSA as the School welcomes not only the new set of School Governing Board members at the time, but the bulk of new students coming from other schools in the Kingdom and from the Philippines.

Her presence will surely be missed in every corner of the School, in every students' thoughts, in IPSA's everyday routine and being. Her absence will definitely create a huge vacuum that it will be hard and take a while to fill.

On behalf of the entire IPSA community, we extend our heartfelt appreciation for your stay at IPSA and for leaving IPSA better than you found it!



## Ms. A: Triangulation

by: Mrs. Sharon D. Tarantan

Each vertex of a triangle represents Ms. A as a leader, a principal, and a woman. Each vertex and edges of a triangle has a big part to connect with each other.

The first vertex (which is the apex) is her leadership. She led the IPSA teachers and staff by example. She wanted her teachers to be Reading Teachers because she is a one-of-a-kind bookworm I should say. This was the reason I met Edward de Bono and learned to wear different hats in every classroom and life situation. And even, Stephen R. Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, wherein I understand about quadrants, Put First Things First and a lot more (but I need to review to think deeper).

She is a generous leader wherein she pushed us (the teachers) to take and finish our Master's Degree. She also shared with us what she knows and what she has because Ms. A once said, *"Success is not a success without a successor."*

The 2nd vertex is her principalship. After a year of being the School Principal of IPSA, this was the first year when the Kinder to 12 Curriculum was implemented. With Ms. A as our facilitator, we studied together the hows and whys of K to 12. It has been a tough year for all of us. I for once did some readings and watched the videos from YouTube on how to go through with KPUP as the different assessments to be used in K to 12.

This was also the year when there was a crackdown that all dependent teachers were not permitted to work. She handled the situation with the right decisions and she did what she could do to transfer the dependent teachers to School Visa status and I am one of the beneficiaries of that hard work.

She introduced the core values of IPSA, the 3 C's - Character, Competence, Collaboration, and Dr. Dennis Prince Y. Germono added one (1) more c which is Change.

As a principal, she is very hands-on on her responsibilities. She sees to it that every lesson and strategy are student-centered and the teachers are the facilitators of learning. That's why IPSANs are LEARNING CHAMPS.

The 3rd vertex that will complete the triangle is her womanhood—*'a woman with firm dispositions and gentleness'*.

I look at her as a tough one but she will cry and laugh with you. She wears different kinds of hats: friend, daughter, wife, and a mother.

A Lady with Intelligence and Excellent Zeal of Eagerness to Lead is about to go and put her piece of triangle to another apex to complete her mission as an educator.

Thank you, Ms. A, for sharing your piece of triangle to I.P.S.A.





## Golden A

by: Mr. Maribon P. Rovillos

"I found Rome built of bricks; I left her clothed in marble." This is one of the famous quotes uttered by Augustus when he assessed his rule as the first emperor of Rome. Arguably, some studies revealed that Rome didn't change in contrast to what the emperor claimed. It was the massive mining of marble that paved the way to begin innumerable constructions throughout the Roman Empire. This finding might discredit Augustus' accomplishment, but there was one thing we cannot deny and that is putting an end to the long civil wars in the whole empire under his reign was considered his greatest legacy.

What was the point of all this? In our life, inside each one of us is a brick, a marble, a civil war, a Pax Romana or an emperor like Augustus with the capacity and willingness to make a difference and etch an indelible mark on everyone's heart.

Today, I will share a story likened to Augustus of modern times and how Pax Romana was achieved during her reign. Her name Liezel means 'My God is bountiful; My God is in my Oath'. Her name alone signifies how God has favored her and blessed her to lead. She is an instructional leader who has been looked up to and loved by many because of her unblemished leadership prowess, unquestioned intelligence, and Solomon-like ways of making decisions. She is the architect of what our beloved school has ever achieved for the past ten years. Literally and figuratively, she has transformed IPSA from a school of bricks to school clothed by marble and has stopped 'civil wars' by developing a school with a culture of peace, tolerance, and understanding.

Yes, like any other Roman leader, she is not perfect but she is constantly being able to do decrees, has written laws and decisions that are for the benefit of the majority. For this, as one of the Roman soldiers under her watch and tutelage, I am immensely grateful I have been working with her for more than a half-decade. Her decision to leave us might be considered one of the untold and silent battles that surprised us but as part of her legionaries, I support her as she embarks on a new journey in her life and career and for the future battles she may lead. I pause and acknowledge her for bringing out the best attributes of a great soldier in me (us). For inspiring all of us to always aspire for greater things in life. And for continually reminding us that the true measure of success is not always winning but making a difference in the lives of others and having a positive impact on the community we live in.

Taken by: Jezreel D. Tarantan



## Salamat, Aming Huwarang Prinsipal

ni: G. Romer S. Gobuyan

Sa loob ng isang daan at walong buwan,  
Marami mang pagsubok ang pinagdaanan,  
Ngunit wala pa ring atrasan;  
Marami na rin ang pinagsamahan at naging magkakaibigan.

Isang huwarang prinsipal ng mga kaguruan  
Na nagkaroon ng isang magandang samahan,  
Kahit anong pagsubok ay hindi nila inaatasan,  
Kaya nila itong pagtagumpayan.

Isang grupo ng kaguruan  
Na kung minsan ay may mga alitan,  
Pero ilang sandali, ito ay kanilang kinakalimutan,  
At tuloy na ulit ang kaligayahan.

Sa kabila ng lahat ng ito ay may nakaagapay—  
Isang huwarang prinsipal ang aming tagapatnubay  
Na maaaring maging inspirasyon namin sa aming tagumpay.  
Prinsipal na yata sa habambuhay; salawikain n'ya siguro sa buhay.

Ginang Liezel Aguilar ang kanyang pangalan,  
Kahit kailan ay hindi mo malilimutan,  
Kapag may kailangan, nandiyan siya magpakailanman.  
Salamat sa iyo, aming huwarang prinsipal,  
na tumayo bilang ikalawang ina sa aming paaralan.

Salamat sa iyo, mahal naming huwarang prinsipal,  
nang dahil sa inyo kami ay natuto—  
Kaalaman na galing sa aming magulang, kasama ang kaalamang mula sa inyo  
Ay hindi kayang tumbasan ng anumang ginto.  
Salamat sa Diyos kami ay nagkaroon ng isang huwarang prinsipal katulad ninyo.





## Isang Pagsaludo

ni: Bb. Thessa Charmaine B. Balagot

Halos mag-iisang dekada na  
nang ang IPSA'y mangailangan—  
isang prinsipal mula sa Perlas ng Silangan;  
Nanalangin nang taimtim, Si Ms. A ang dumating,  
Heto na, kumapit ka, pag-usapan natin.

Totoo, maraming nagbago!  
Iba't iba ang naramdaman ng mga tao:  
Mga guro at estudyante, sumabay sa pagbabago,  
Naging abala— mga paa, paroo't parito.

Ito ang talagang maganda:  
Naipagpatuloy niya kung saan ang IPSA ay kilala!  
Sa academics at sports namayagpag sila,  
Filipino Community sa Gitnang Silangan, saludo  
sa IPSA!

Sa bagong landas na tatahakin,  
Aming pasasalamat iyong tanggapin;  
Turo at pangaral aming itanim,  
Sa aming mga puso at mga damdamin.

Farewell, maasalamah, aming sasambitin,  
At mga salitang, "Ms. A, mami-miss ka namin."

## To Ms. A,

All the special time I spent with you, all the arguments and words so few, will always be cherished in my heart.

I may not remember everything you said but I will remember how you mentor and lead me because I know you always want the best for me.

I am grateful for your impact and I really appreciate your love for our family.

Thank you for everything that you have accomplished so far and good luck on everything you plan for the future.

Your favorite,  
Olivia T. Araya

## STEMatic Leader, Miss A

by: Mr. Darwin S. Majid

*"At the end of the day, people won't remember what you said or did; they'll remember how you made them feel,"* Maya Angelou famously stated. This could not be more accurate about how I wish to express what is in my mind, I may not recall everything you imparted, but you left an indelible imprint on me.

The birth of the different clubs in the Home of the Scions, IPSA, marks the beginning of a remarkable transformation to prepare the future gears of the nation to meet the demands of the changing world. Robotics Club, the flag bearer of all the club started to find its way and make a name through your untiring support, and for choosing me to be one the moderators created a great drive in myself, you believed in me and in return made me believe in myself. You made me trust myself and try to hone my potential to try my hardest. This was the most important idea that you have passed on to me as a great leader and a mentor. These ideas have continued to develop throughout my life with the help of other people but I will always trace this notion to you. Your STEMatic ideals of the importance of robotics for our learners manifests on how you always find time to share with me on how to improve the Robotics Club, not just to be a club but a youth development program in terms of building self-efficacy and increasing 'knowledge capital' as a fundamental building blocks of innovation in the form of scientific or technological advancements. Every time that there is a seminar or training for Robotics and I wish to participate, you do not hesitate to approve it. Every robotics platform that I propose to indulge the learners with you was whole-heartedly approved, because of that pipeline of understanding that robotics is changing as the industrial revolution progresses. Our roboticist started with a simple I-Box III Robotics kit, simple build and drag and drop program and throughout its existence we have now a more challenging platform like EV3 Mindstorm and Arduino, which are widely used in different countries as the main platform for STEM and robotics education. IPSA is not far behind those countries, thank you for your untiring support for the endeavor of the club.

With the utmost support and belief in our Robotics program capability, we even participated in the first ever National Robotics Competition ONLINE organized by the Pinoy Robot Games last April 10 - May 8, 2021. Our roboticist, Sonsona brothers, participated in different 1-minute games and shared with the other participants their robotic skills in a competition that we consider as the most precious moments in the timeline of the existence of the club we treasured. We never stopped with this one competition, we also participated in the Virtual Robot Rugby game, we were not able to make it through to the finals but playing against other schools in the Philippines is a great honor and privilege experience, and behind all of this is a great leader and mentor, a transformative leader with a mind that predicts the future at hand, and make a systematic decision coupled always with action point, it is you, Miss A, who make all this vision possible, a mission within two set goals of leading the IPSA Scions to the forefront of Robotics and Sciences program in Philippine School in the Eastern province. It has nothing to do with robots. Robotics programs are only a medium to a greater scale that Miss A is constructing. It's all about self-assurance, confidence, collaboration, critical-thinking, creativity, and life skills all boils down to ensuring that scions' future is better than the past.

Envisioning IPSA as the first Science School in the Eastern Province, the second vision Miss A set upon the academic pillars of our beloved home of the scions. With this in mind, and guided by research-based, service-driven, and innovative education mission statement of IPSA gave birth to the Science Investigatory Project or SIP as the main Performance Task from Grades 4-6 for the entire whole year. This Performance Task originally applied only to Grades 6 and the High School, but with the love of science and vision of embodying IPSans with scientific literacy and scientific inquiry skills, this activity was implemented starting from Grade 4. Building on these visions emphasize the concepts and value of scientific information, its use in specific circumstances, critical-thinking, and engagement. Believing that scientific literacy is an integral component of global competence which is essential for individuals to thrive in a rapidly-changing world and for societies to grow without leaving anyone behind, these are what at the back of Miss A's mind, looking forward that in the future, IPSAns will step out on the stage of ISEF or the International Science and Engineering Fair, an annual science fair in the United States organized by the Society for Science and sponsored by the Intel Corporation. In order for IPSAns to showcase their critical-thinking skills and creativity and feel the atmosphere of science competition, every year we held the Science Fair or exhibit of the Science Investigatory Project from Grades 4 to High School. One of the first things that I admire with Miss A is that with a systematic approach and mindset, when COVID-19 came into our lives, it never hinders on how we can present the Science Fair, and with that opens a lot of doors for our competent Science teachers to explore the ways on how to go on with it, we were able to explore apps that make 360 degrees presentation, create website to upload digital video portfolio of SIP of our dear young scientist, and play with Roblox and Minecraft to be able to get on the digital age of our learners. All students deserve the opportunity to acquire a passion for science, a sense of competence in scientific activity, and the scientific literacy necessary to be informed citizens.

Miss A, the chief disturber as she describes herself, has not only motivated me to improve my craft academically as a teacher but also to improve myself as a person, your willingness and being open-minded to understand the teachings and beliefs of every one's ideals open up a bridge for communication and understanding, that we are as one, with same life mission and life's role. Every time that we will have a short talk about academic matters, I am always looking forward to hear piece of wisdom and teachings that is ecumenical in nature, and as I sat on my table, it will always resonate in my mind and heart.

You've had a significant impact in the Home of the Scions, I believe that your efforts and influence had remarkably change the way IPSA is, the vision of creating a Champion School where learners and staffs hone their greatest potentials and abilities, to be called CHAMPS, you are definitely deserving of every accolade possible. Thank you for being an amazing leader and one of the most inspiring persons I've ever met.







## QUITA, RENEE and NARA

by: Mrs. Mary Jane C. Soriano

**Nakita mo ba?** (*Have you seen it?*) **Narinig mo ba?** (*Have you heard it?*) **Naranasan mo ba?** (*Have you experienced it?*). Don't you know that it is not 'Maritess' (*Mare, ano'ng latest?*) and her kin that dominates the tinsel town of IPSA but it's the OBA clan! Thanks to Ms. A! I had a great time with Quita, Renee and Nara Oba.

### QUITA M. OBA (Nakita mo ba?)

It was one foundation day celebration when I first saw her. Afar from the stage, I gazed at her, scrutinizing her from head to toe. Trying to make a 'quick judgment' of her being new in IPSA. Young, bespectacled and petite, I wondered how she could lead us? I am curious if she has a strong endurance and stamina. Numbers were playing in my mind (of her stint as our new principal) 1..2..3 years? ....and the rest is history.

Her name is Liezel Agtarap Aguilar. And she preferred to be called Ms. A. *"What is essential is invisible to the human eye"*. I entirely agree with this famous quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* book. However, what I saw with Ms. A's term as our principal has proven that *"What is significant must also be visible to the naked eye."*

Her passion as an educator is remarkably discernable through the 'many transformations' in our curriculum and pedagogical practices. There maybe imperfections along the way, still, I believe, all IPSA teachers exude a 'portion' of her passion. For us, to be under her tutelage is both an honor and a privilege. More so, the pupils and students adore her. How I love to see the kids visiting her and having a small talk in her office. Yes, she is firm but also lovable in the eyes of the learners.

My curious and prying eyes would look for her every Teacher's and Staff's Day. I love to see the 'playful' side of her. I enjoyed seeing her dressed like Professor Mc Gonagall, an African matriarch, and the latest, as a referee. Sophisticated and amusing!

Ms. A is really an amazing subject of interest. You can easily see what is in her heart. From being "Quita M. Oba" for a time, I have learned to enjoy and find goodness and happiness to what I see.

### RENEE M. OBA (Narinig mo ba?)

Morning assemblies, INSET meetings, Commencement Exercises and other school events, these are some of the events when I get to hear Ms. A speak to a huge crowd. Every morning assembly on Sunday, I am an enthusiastic 'Renee M. Oba'. Believe it or not I look forward to hearing her words of wisdom for the week. Though she may address her reminders and /or her small talks to the students, I still listen to her intently. Every week she has a story to tell. She would talk about how to show respect, how to conduct oneself properly, how to value one's parents and a lot more. The students are enlightened and so do I. Every INSET meeting, I am an active 'Renee M. Oba' trying not to miss her points on topics at hand. During General Assembly, I am a biased 'Renee M. Oba' - what Ms. A says I will believe and support, others' opinion doesn't matter at all. And on a regular basis, I've learned to be a critical 'Renee M. Oba' - hear what is only good and beneficial, and try your best to shun what is not.

As Ms. A speaks, you can hear her victories, her frustrations and even her fears. But what reverberates in me is how she professes her FAITH in GOD.

### NARA M. OBA (Naranasan mo ba?)

"I am a hard boss."

This is one of the quotable quotes of Ms. A which awe me. The 'Nara M. Oba' in me would strongly agree that she is a hard boss! Especially during the pandemic where all were expected to embrace the sudden yet necessary shift from face-to-face teaching to virtual learning delivery mode. That two years in a row were 'the most challenging years of my life' as a teacher. However, I did not back down. Why? Simply because Ms. A did not give up on us. She could have left us, but she chose to stay.

Yes, she is a hard boss... but...with a big heart!

Her big heart means 'rejoicing on breakthroughs and thanksgiving' through simple celebrations.

Her big heart goes to the young minds who seek education to learn the ways of life.

Her big heart is with the old souls who are shaken by the test of times yet still fighting.

You may not agree with me; however, this is what I have felt whenever I have a chance to be with her.

The 'Nara M. Oba' in me will forever recollect the happy moments with her and hopes that she will continue to soar high in her next endeavor.

I know there's still more to tell about Ms. A but I will stick with the Oba Clan: With 'Quita', I need to *see it first*, with 'Renee', *I should hear it first*, and with 'Nara', *I must experience it first*.



## Si Ms. A lang ang SAKALAM

ni: G. Bernard C. Ampiloquio

Hindi ko alam kung paano ko uumpisahan ang pagsulat ng isang tula para sa isang taong kagila-gilalas, kamangha-mangha. Marami kasi akong naiisip na mga salita... na sa palagay ko ang mga ito para sa kanya ay akmang-akma.

Kaya naisip ko na lang gamitin ang ilang aralin sa asignaturang Filipino dahil dito naman niya ako nakilala sa aming unang pagkikita... ..at alam kong minsan na rin sa pagiging guro niya ay nagturo na rin siya ng wika, panitikan at iba pa.

Ang **pangngalan** ay salita o bahagi ng pangungusap na tumutukoy sa ngalan ng tao, bagay, pook, hayop, at pangyayari.

Unahin natin ang kanyang pangalan. Gng. 'Liezel Agtarap Aguilar' ito ang kanyang buong pangalan, pero marami na rin siyang mga naging katawagan. Tinatawag siyang Ms. A ng karamihan ng mga guro, mga bata at ilang mga kaibigan, 'Liezel' naman ang tawag ng ilan, 'Bossing' din ang tawag sa kanya, minsan kasi siya naman ang pinuno ng paaralan. Hindi ko lang alam kung ito rin ang kanilang tawagan ng kanyang asawa pag sila'y naglalambingan. At siyempre, hindi mawawala ang tawag na 'Nanay' ng kanyang mga anak mula sa sinapupunan. Pero minsan, nabansagan na rin siya ng mga katawagang hindi kaaya-aya ng mga taong sa palagay nila na ang aksyon at pasya na ginawa ay hindi na tama.

Ang **pang-uri** ay bahagi ng pananalita na nagbibigay-deskripsyon o turing sa ngalan ng tao, bagay, hayop, pangyayari, lugar, kilos, oras, at iba pa. Sa bahaging ito hindi ako mahihirapan sapagkat marami siyang mga katangian. Sa kanyang pisikal na kaanyuan siya ay simple lamang may kulay na kayumanggi, hindi kataasan, hindi rin naman kaliitan, hindi naman mataba, hindi rin naman payat ang pangangatawan, may bilugang mukha at buhok na itim na minsan maikli at kung minsan nama'y mahaba. Ngunit ang isa sa napasin ko sa kanya na kahit siya ay medyo galit na at nagsasalubong na ang kilay ng kanyang mga mata... masisilayan pa rin sa kanyang mukha ang pagiging mahinahon niya. At kung ang kanya namang ugali at pamumuno ang aking ilalarawan... hindi rin naman siya naiiba sa pangkaraniwang namumuno sa isang paaralan. Pagdating sa kapakanan, kaligtasan at kalidad ng edukasyon ng mga mag-aaral na kanyang nasasakupan, ito ang una sa kanyang listahan: Laging siyang nag-iisip ng ibat ibang kaparaanan kung paano huhubugin ang mga bata sa landas na dapat nitong lakaran.

Pagdating naman sa mga guro at mga kawani na kanyang pinamumunuan hindi rin naman matatawaran— marunong makisama at iniisip ang kanilang kapakanan. Gumagawa ng mga kaparaanan at nagpapatupad ng mga programang makatutulong sa pagkakaroon ng maayos na pamumuhay at higit sa lahat magpapaunlad sa pagiging mahusay at mabisang gurong kasangkapan sa paghubong ng puso at isipan ng mga kabataan

Ang **pangungusap** ay ang kalipunan ng mga salitang nagsasaad ng isang buong diwa. Ito ay may patapos na himig sa dulo na nagsasaad ng diwa o kaisipang nais niyang ipaabot. Kagaya ng isang pangungusap na nagsasaad ng isang buong diwa, ang kanyang naging pamumuno at mga nagawa ay tunay nga kompleto at kahanga-hanga; Maraming nagawang mga pagbabago sa kalidad ng edukasyon at serbisyo para sa kapakanan ng mga mag-aaral, magulang at maging mga empleyado.

Buong sikap at tiyaga niyang tinupad ang tungkulin bilang pinuno ng paaralan— maayos at mahusay niyang napangunahan ang kanyang mga nasasakupan, Dumaan din sa maraming bagyo at sigwa na yumanig sa kanyang pamamahala na nagdulot ng sakit at mga patagong pagluha...

Ngunit, ang lahat ng ito'y kanyang nalagpasan... buong tapang niyang hinarap ang mga pagsubok at problema alang-alang sa kanyang pamilya at sa tungkuling kanyang sinumpaan,

kaya para sa akin... si Ms. A. lang ang SAKALAM!







## And We Call Her Ms. A

by: Ms. Michelle A. Mendoza

I really have a hard time writing this, let alone finding the right words to use. Well, not because I don't like the person I am writing this for, but just because my muse of creativity has flown somewhere and left without telling me why. After a lot of prodding, I finally got her back, so here goes...

We call her Ms. A. short for her surname and to distinguish her from the rest. What can I say about her? Just so you know, things weren't smooth in the beginning. There were 'battles' here and there. Miscommunications, different people telling different stories were very strong in my first few years here between me and her. Things started to boil down when after all those years, issues have been ironed out, truths came out and well, it has been that way until now, as I believe it is and hope she does, too.

What can I say about Ms A? Well, she's strong-willed especially with issues that put her 'face-to-face' with her 'forever frenemy', Sir Mike (ahahahah). As a leader, she is organized, a very efficient planner and if I may say, has contributed a lot to where IPSA is right now in all aspects. With her self-effacing demeanor, her grace under pressure; admittedly, it is quite a feat for someone of her stature in the academe. Nonetheless, I have so much pride having been part of this institution with her at the helm. I got to see what power a woman can have. She never tires of learning, most of the time I wonder, does she ever sleep? Coz most of us dread the long memos or list of what we need to fulfill as class advisers cascaded down by our academic supervisors sometimes even after office hours and during weekends. This has made us think, ok, peeps, we do sleep and rest, just so you know? But after we have said our sentiments, things got a little lighter.

The transition of IPSA from online to hybrid brought about by the pandemic was really a humongous leap; but with her as our captain, we sailed through rough waters and made it. I am truly proud to say that the pandemic was not all bad. This has brought the best in all of us, especially our Ms. A.

I reckon that with her resignation from IPSA, the next SP will definitely have very huge shoes to fill in. I do not like to sound that I am comparing her coz I will no longer have the chance to work with the incoming SP by the way. But I am coming from the experience of working with Ms. A. It was not easy matter-of-factly but in all honesty, I did learn a lot.

For her untiring desire to make us all achieve academic excellence in our varying fields as teachers, she worked on getting SPUM for our masters/doctorates. It was her vision for us to grow more professionally and to be at par with the highest standards globally that prompted her to make this happen. And it did, for that we are grateful. I am truly thankful.

Ms. A, is very vocal about what she envisions for IPSA to be, for the teachers and staff, for the students in general. I have seen her going home late, even on weekends, I have heard, she still works. Ms. A equals hard work. How can someone ever be equal to a smart woman like her in terms of professionalism, dedication and hard work? I can imagine how as I am so deep in sleep that Ms. A is still working on something for the school. No nights or weekends for her.

When I was asked to write this article about Ms. A, surprisingly my muse did not come as easily as it did when I wrote for Papa Doms and Ma'am Cora. I think it was because I had different relationships with the two. With Ms. A, it was always on the formal/professional side. However, the last few months, it was more chill than tense. We had two things in common now—the SPIMS and Kakampinks. I love how she would forward documents for me to read, how we would be so jovial about our bet for the presidency. How we would burst out laughing when we 'collide' with those colleagues on the opposite side of the bar. And then there's the SPIMS journey that we both are so excited about.

Ms. A, we may be parting ways but I want you to know that it was indeed a pleasure and honor to have worked with you. With all the ups and downs, I cannot thank you enough. I will also leave IPSA but I am proud to say that I am more than ready to face new challenges because I am all geared up with all the added skills and knowledge I have learned from you and the institution in general. Though we are heading on opposite directions, I am pretty sure that there will always be those times that I will think of you and would put a smile on my face and I'd say with my head nodding in jest, "and we call her...Ms. A."

## Liezel A. Aguilar

ni: Gng. Maxima M. Mangahas

Mula nang tumuntong sa sintang paaralan,  
doon nakilala ang isang uliran;  
Kapag nakasasalubong ng kahit sinoman,  
babati ba o yuyuko? Di magkaalaman.

Google ng IPSA kung siya ay turan,  
Gamit niyang salita'y tunay na nakasisilam;  
Pipindot at pipindot ka nang di mo namamalayan,  
Dahil hahanapin mo kung ano ang kahulugan.

Sa pamamalakad ay wala siyang katulad,  
Gawain pa sa isang taon ay alisto agad;  
Gurong aligaga ay dapat na masipag,  
Kasi ay maiiwanan kung ikaw ay makupad.

Sa mga diskusyon na di-magkaintindihan,  
Sapagkat iba-iba ang takbo ng isipan;  
Ngunit subukin mong siya ay tawagan,  
Sa kanyang salita'y tapos ang usapan.

Sa ipinagkaloob sa kanyang talento,  
Ang pahat na kaalaman ay unti-unting natuto;  
Sa kanyang mga kamay ay hinubog tayo,  
Upang ating maibahagi kung ano ang wasto.

Maraming mga bagay ang sadyang tumatak  
Sa puso't isipa'y aming ilalagak.  
Tanggapin mo ang aming munting pasalamat  
Sa mga kabutihan mong puro at sapat.

Maraming salamat po sa iyong iniambag,  
Aming babaunin saanman mapadpad;  
Upang nang sa ganoon ay hindi bumagsak,  
Sapagkat kami'y tatak ng iyong mga palad.

Patnubayan nawa ang iyong pamilya,  
Iyan ang aming hiling sa Alpha at Omega;  
Saanman tumungo kami ay kasama,  
Dahil kami'y bakas ng iyong alaala.

Siya nga pala bago magkalimutan,  
Ang taong ito'y di pa napangangalanan;  
Ms. A sa paaralan kung siya ay turan,  
Liezel A. Aguilar ang tunay na ngalan!







## Taking Delight in the Happiness of Other People

by: Gweneth D. Dizon

In the pre-colonial Philippines, we worshiped inanimate objects: *we praised the sun for giving us light, the rain for growing our crops, the rocks for building our shelters, and the trees for sustaining our motherland's growth.* We believed that these shared at least one vital quality, which was a spirit residing in them. Our gratitude was spontaneous—yet inordinate with present practices.

Nowadays, the mere recognition of something or someone's presence is difficult to grasp; what about appreciation? Second-hand happiness is always taken for granted even though it sparked joy in our hearts, flashed a smile on our faces, and raised our serotonin levels. We always believe that what was in the moment must be left at the moment, yet do we not grieve for the loss of a memory? What about the old couple we saw holding hands at Corniche, or a kid laughing while riding a carousel? What about the wholesome comment section in TikTok, or the millions of motivational posts on Instagram? If a spirit within an object is too much for us, what about the spirit within our hearts?

Erratically, it is mystifying and puzzling to think that these echoes merely come and go as we continue with our lives as a student, a parent, a worker... a person. However, one characteristic of animism remained within us and that was empathy, which was one of the key factors of human development. It is still true that society is gradually progressing and evolving; it is just that we forget to take delight in the sympathetic, vicarious happiness of other people.

## Adolescence: Simultaneously Too Young Yet Old Enough

by: Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

Technically, age is a chronological or a hierarchical order of life, but is there more to age that most people do not understand and only adolescents do? Coming of age gives you even more weight to carry, so how heavy is it now that aging feels like climbing a slope with heavy baggage? It's like you're always searching for the fine print to see if you're doing alright in life—you're torn between whether you're still too young or old enough.

Rapid physical, emotional, and social changes take place during adolescence. We question ourselves at this point in life because all the changes seem so foreign to us. Everything we do, from roles and responsibilities to direction and ambition, is carefully considered. It's usually the big decisions we have to make that cause us the most anxiety. Navigation becomes a daily routine; all we ask for is a route to follow. Our ambitions gradually increase in scope and complexity as we proceed toward pursuing them. You learn to juggle studies, extracurricular activities, and personal relationships. With everything combined, you feel the gravity of the transition.

While youth is the dawn of angst, it is also the time for most spontaneity. It is the best time to act on impulse as we see through rose-colored glass carelessly. Although we can already get a slight taste of independence, we should know how to differentiate recklessness and merrymaking. That's why there is the idea of being old enough yet still so young. This is not to limit us but to give caution. Fun can be experienced in freedom, as long as we don't let freedom get the best of us.

Despite all the drawbacks youth might have, it remains significant. It will be that time of your life that will be ingrained within your whole being for as long as you live. In your later years, you will remember those times when you weren't so young, nor too old, just the right age to have made an impact. Our age is not an indication of what we can or can't do, but sometimes, it indicates the things we should or shouldn't do. We shouldn't let us, teens, seem like all we are is just teenagers with raging hormones because we are the future. The essence of youth is that we will reset the future anew.

## Where Are the Souls of Words?

by: Gweneth D. Dizon

They are in the notification from your favorite person. They are in the lyrics from the song you had in shuffle. They are in the classroom's private comments from your best teacher. They are in the game you play best when you get a victory. They are in the motivational post you see in your feed. They are in the random screenshot you took from a conversation. They are in the story replies when you rant in your private account. They are in the 10-second YouTube video advertisement you cannot skip. They are in the live widget that your friends recently sent.

It is everywhere when you look through a positive lens. Words have souls; they have the spiritual power to move your heart and shift your frown. It's not only the way they are spoken to you, but it is also through their presence when you scan your eyes over them. Let your mind immerse itself in the beauty of words and its impact on you. It is true—you should just let the emotion flow through your system.







## Noli Manalang: Contemporary Visual Artist

by: John Anthony S. Luna

I've personally never really been fond of modern art. Its abstract nature never appealed to me, and it didn't help that a lot of them are blasphemous, obscene, and degenerate. It feels kind of worse knowing that fellow Filipinos also make this kind of art. Perhaps I'm stuck in the past, and a rock behind white background is of artistic value. The degradation of our standards of beauty for the sake of self-expression has diluted what it means to be beautiful. If I sound like an art snob, perhaps I am. Notwithstanding the glamourising introduction to this article, there is a contemporary artist I think is worthy of mentioning.

After an hour of searching for an artist, I came across a certain Noli Principe Manalang. Born in July 1978 in the province of Bulacan, he finished his Bachelor of Science in Architecture at the University of Sto. Tomas in 2000. As a student, he won several art competitions, despite initially considering becoming an Architect. In 2005, he received the 11th Freeman Foundation Asian Artists Fellowship Awards from Vermont Studio Center in the United States. His early artworks were religious in nature, consisting of images of the Blessed Mother and processions to showcase Filipino religiosity.

Next on, he began painting mythical creatures from local Filipino legends which only caught my interest more. Nowadays he makes art out of well-known personalities that resemble playing cards, delighting the interest of collectors. Only time will tell what he will come up with next. His artstyle can only be described as uniquely his own, with special emphasis on colors and patterns coupled with masterful use of balancing and contrasting makes his art all the more fascinating.

Noli's painting was the featured cover of the 2010 Larasati Asian Modern and Contemporary Art Auction in Singapore. He is the recipient of way too many awards to list down, but he has won first place, finalist, and juror's choice several times in many competitions- national, local, and international. I personally am entranced by his work. It's something that I can't quite describe. I can't decide whether I like it or hate it but I can only say his artwork enamores the viewer. His art looks like it's straight out of fantasy. Some of his works range from being simple watercolor and hyper-realist paintings to bizarre and surreal, but never abstract. He experimented with several styles and his medieval paintings are worth looking into.

Some of his other works are unsettling for me but there will be people out there into those kinds of things. It's hard to choose a piece to choose which will define him, but if I were to choose it would be his work 'Napoleon' dated 2006. While not an original work in the sense that he sampled it from two other paintings by Jacques-Louis David, as he is renowned for remixing art from old paintings into his own unique blend, the colors and card style still alluring in a way indescribable, is with most of his works. Maybe, he cannot be compared to the likes of Rody Herrera Fernando, Fernando Amorsolo, Fabián de la Rosa, Felix Hidalgo, or Juan Luna, but regardless of what one may think of his craft, he captivated my interest and I hope yours, too.



## Arthur Nery: Rise to OPM Stardom

by: Sharmaine Abigail Q. Mendiola

Maybe you are tired of the upbeat Hip hop or the Heavy Metal rock music. The same old songs you started listening to three years ago are still playing on repeat in your Spotify playlist. It somehow feels like there is no possible way to find another singer to add to your favorites. I know how difficult it can be to find an artist who produces music that connects with your vibe and energy. Put your trust in Arthur Nery, someone who creates Pop with a hint of Neo-Soul R&B!

The young male solo artist was born and raised in the Philippines. Arthur Nery liked playing basketball with his friends on the streets of Cagayan De Oro during the day. He would also grab fruits from the trees of their neighbors. Aside from this, music had been a big part of his childhood. His parents were singers and in their household, singing worship songs before sleeping was clockwork. His dad, who was into jazz and blues, had influenced him with artists like Frank Sinatra and Michael Bublé. He recalled that he discovered he could sing after performing 'Fly Me To The Moon' in his cousin's debut in front of guests.

During his high school and college days, Arthur experimented with making and writing music and songs but he mostly kept it between himself or close friends and family. Just like any other teen, the songs he wrote were mostly about his crushes but he never really felt the urge to finish or publish them. He took up Psychology at the Ateneo de Cagayan for college and from there, he joined the school's glee club. The organization helped develop his voice and confidence. After that, he briefly worked as a call center agent and an online English tutor teaching Japanese students. According to him, he genuinely enjoyed his jobs before becoming a singer and songwriter, it is just so that his flaming passion for music overthrew his enjoyment.

When Arthur decided to become a full-time musician, he struggled to gain exposure and popularity. He resorted to performing at birthday parties, weddings, beauty pageants, etc. He attended as an opening act at a gig in Bukidnon in 2019. He sang the song he wrote titled 'Life Puzzle' which caught the attention of the comedian Wacky Kiray. When the comedian found out that Arthur did not have a record deal yet, he contacted Callalily's frontman. 'Life Puzzle' became Arthur's first official single under Kean Cipriano's record label O/C Records.

On October 1, 2021, he released 'Pagsamo'. It broke records on different streaming platforms and Spotify alone; he dominated the number one spot of various playlists. The solo track is the first and only OPM song on Spotify Philippines chart history to breach the 500K-daily-stream mark with 553.3K streams on its four consecutive days! And he did not only affirm the Number 1 spot in the Top 50 Philippines but dominated it with four other tracks namely; 'Higa', 'Binhi', 'Pelikula', and 'Happy w u (ft Jason Dhakal)'.

I can say every single one of his works is my favorite, but 'Binhi' gained a special place in my heart. "Kaya tahan na, sumandal ka," these lines immediately captivated me. The track was background music in a shop that we happened to be in. I felt so vulnerable yet comforted with the beat and his voice. I didn't even have to search high and low to find the song since it was in the charts. 'Binhi' is a Tagalog love song, a combination of soothing beats and Arthur's romantic, sultry voice. The romantic vibe hides the flawless heartbreaking lyrics. Based on my understanding, the song portrays that it is useless to force each other to get back to how they used to be because either way, they will break up in the end. He may be implying that there is no sense in crying and he wants to cherish their last moments together, even if it is only for a little while.

Arthur Nery delivers excellent vocals, truthfulness, and emotion in every song he puts out. His openness, all the raw emotion, and the effort that he puts into every work he produces are commendable. Listening to his music feels like talking to a close friend after a bad day. I feel that all my worries and struggles are valid and that it is okay to be vulnerable at times. Sometimes, it feels like a quiet afternoon, the air filled with the scent of the warm cup of coffee mixed with the scent of soil and flowers. Overall, I hope this has piqued your interest so go check him out.







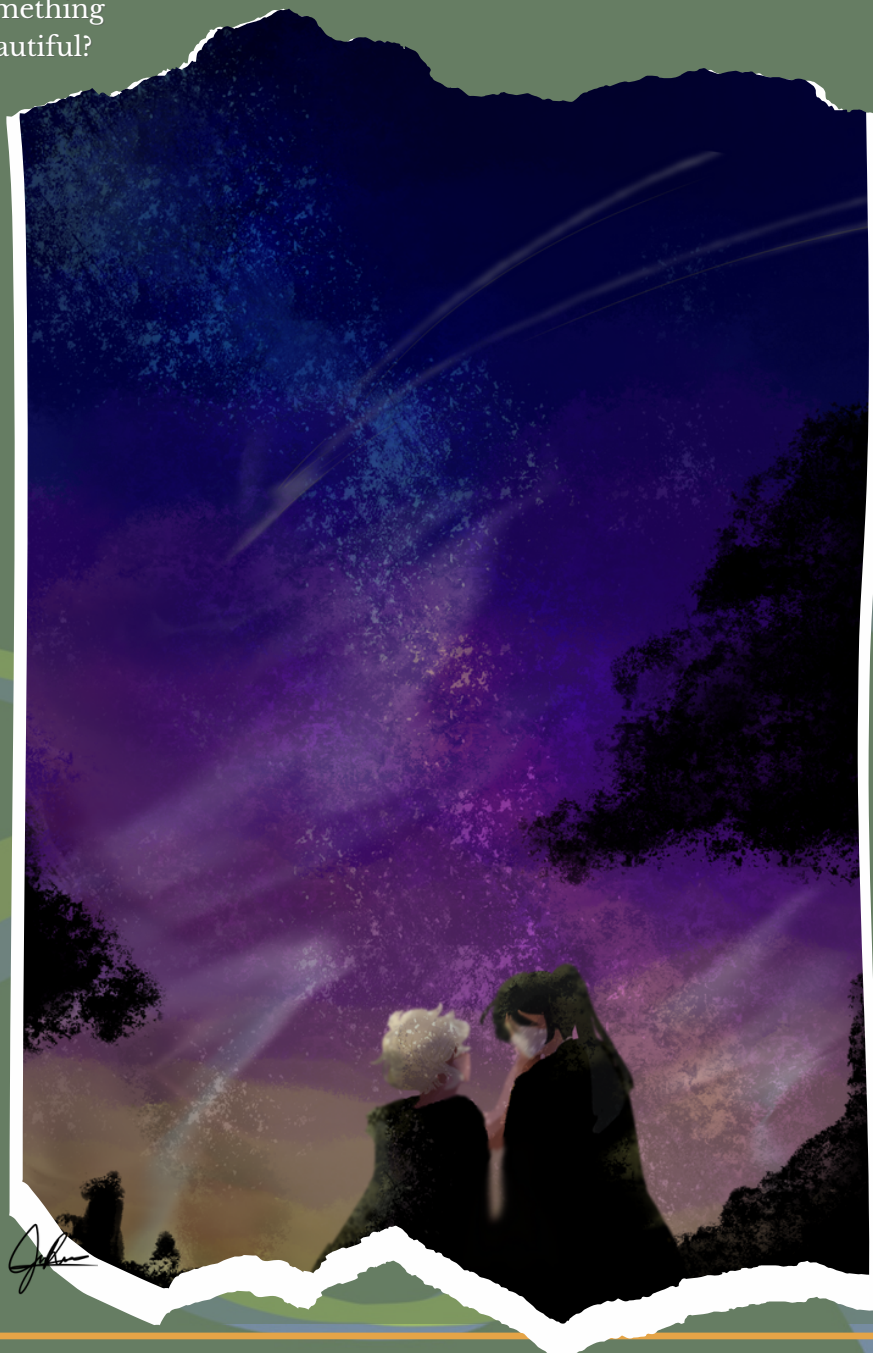
## Imposter Syndrome Online

by: John Anthony S. Luna

I first heard about impostor syndrome when I was scrolling through the artistic side of the Internet back in eighth grade. At first, I didn't understand the term but I soon learned that it isn't something we articulate but something we internalize. Nearly 70% of individuals will experience some form of impostor phenomenon. Impostor Syndrome is a psychological pattern wherein we doubt our abilities and accomplishments with the persistent fear of being exposed as a fraud and being undeserving of what we achieved—attributed only to luck. Among us are impostors who fear that suspicion reeks within our audience. We can see how this can go wrong in one's perception of themselves.

Understanding our limits and shortcomings is one thing but undervaluing yourself is another. It's made much worse when we see just how talented other people are compared to us, doubting our abilities and creating insecurities that shouldn't exist. We compare ourselves to people all the time, not taking into account their expertise; they had to start from somewhere by investing in mastering their craft. Granted, while insecurity can create the urge in people to become better, it quickly becomes the chains holding us back with the fear of not being able to live up to people's perceptions of us. Perfectionism is a good attribute in rooting out the crud in our works but taken to the extremes it lowers self-esteem and confidence.

Ask yourself, why do you do what you do? Do you post drawings online for the fame and attention that comes with it? Are you more fixated on being known as a great author rather than being able to write something beautiful? Such a thought process will surely drive you down the path of the irrational because you will inevitably build a false image in your head you can never keep up with. Simply not caring about the esoteric and the abstruse is one way to counter Impostor Syndrome. You must cease to fear what people will think of you because you are confident of your abilities. If you love what you are doing, you will seldom feel anxious about the most demanding tasks. Is it not more important to create something beautiful?



## Toxic Positivity: Rose-Colored Glasses in A Thorny Reality

by: Anne Rozel DG. Bernardino

Positive thinking, that often comes with optimism, is a crucial part of effective stress management, and effective stress management is associated with many health benefits. Having a positive mentality or attitude usually helps in lessening the pain people feel, the things people fear and worry about, and in getting through tough times. Positivity can help you cope better with stress, build resilience, and even enhance your immune system. However, this does not mean everything should be regarded through rose-colored glasses.

According to Right as Rain, Toxic Positivity involves dismissing negative emotions and responding to distress with false reassurances rather than empathy. It is often well-intentioned but can cause alienation and a feeling of disconnection. This means that by being too positive, we often disregard the feelings of others in exchange for feeling good about oneself despite the current situation not being alright.

Life is full of ups and downs. And while in an *ideal* world the downs are at a minimum or even nonexistent, the balance of life is essential to our way of living. Every negative experience is a learning curve, a tribute to experience. Refusing to face said experiences can build up negative emotions, social isolation, and more. We don't always have to win. As the saying goes: *you win some, you lose some*. To refuse to acknowledge the problem of a situation is to disregard its consequences and how other people are affected by it.

With all those being said, to avoid toxic positivity, we have to be empathic. Any sort of relationship requires empathy, and we need to have people in our lives who can deal with and handle their emotions—whether positive or negative. As such, we should also uphold these same values, and face reality as it is. Optimism is a wonderful approach towards our everyday lives, but in wrong amounts, isn't always the right one. We have to remember that life comes in waves and in various forms, many of which are stressful and strenuous. Still, it is best to face them head-on than to merely dismiss their existence, because in the words of Henepola Gunaratana: *"Ignorance may be bliss, but it does not lead to liberation."*



### DID YOU KNOW?

According to a study out of the *British Medical Journal*, we can feel happy just by being around other people who are happy. Happiness, the study therefore claims, is contagious. If someone is happy, they can make us happy, and we can in turn make someone else happy.

Bustle







## Learning to Leave the Haunted House

by: Anne Rozel DG. Bernardino

In this new world I'd discovered—one devoid of any kindness and benignity, fear pounded against the window in the form of raindrops. Tears embedded themselves into my skin, landing on hilltop knees like spilled ink. I begged for air yet felt foreign in my lungs, and my chest pounded inside me like a second heart beat. Palms pressed against ears didn't stop the glass from shattering, or me from screaming.

Fear was not enough a word to describe the little girl who begged for everything to stop. Who couldn't understand why her father was yelling at her mother? Is that what you do to the people you love? It doesn't feel right. I thought of what to do, and so I placed my hands together, flinching at the immediate crash of the noise around me. But I closed my eyes as I sobbed, and began to pray. I'd seen my mother do it a few times. I didn't get how it worked, I didn't know who I was praying to. But someone had to listen, right?

I was four years old when I first witnessed my parents fight; a hurricane I could barely recall but I remembered how it shook the earth. I was a lifetime too young when I lived in a haunted house. Because frozen in time I remained there, a lifetime's worth of horrific ordeals in the body of a child.

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Strangers passed me by in a tension I feared, I flinched when the man on the bus brushed against my shoulder. On his face I see my father, and I brush it away. No matter how hard I try I can't wash his gin off my hands—it stains everything I touch and every hand I shake.

I was the synthesis of my past—my father's screams and my mother's sobs and the little girl curled up under the bed of her haunted house. I belonged to them more than they ever belonged to me. I despised how I watched him get buried 6 feet underground—how I held the very dirt that kept him there in the palm of my hands—and yet I still saw his face in every dark corner. He followed me around when I walked to the grocery store and loomed over me as I read a book, and he glared at me when I spoke to someone else. He was always there, everywhere.

I escaped the haunted house with such a desire to love and be loved. It's the only dream I remember, my wish upon a star, my whisper to the dandelions, and the single prayer that spilled from my lips. To find that love, that home somewhere. I wanted to love and be loved,

Until I realized I didn't know what it meant.

It was nothing more than a dictionary term. I could not give what I hadn't been given, and so I remained in this cold seclusion—like that cursed place had a perimeter. I mourned the presence of the frostbit winter,

until I realized that spring had nestled in my hands.

No. I didn't catch a glimpse of a spark, and I wasn't saved by the grace of love. There was no revelation and no miracle and there was no epiphany. The stars didn't align for me, dear the stars didn't have a clue. I didn't jump to the other side—I built the bridge.

I woke up one day, and he was my second thought.

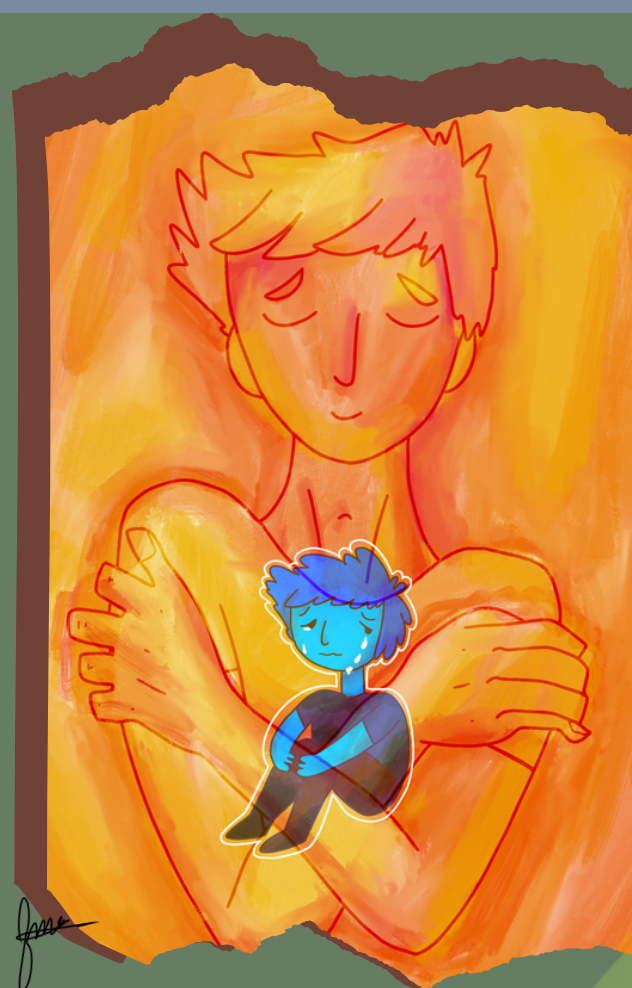
I washed my hands, and there was no stain.

I took a bath, and the water didn't inflame invisible bruises.

I awoke, and it was quiet. Instead of presentiment it was the silence of security. I rose from beneath my sheets, I ate (not to my heart's content but enough), and I laughed. I laughed without realizing its weight. And for a second, I was my own. I was the present, not the dead and gone and buried. I was. I was. But I'm learning to unlearn the ways of who I was and where I came from—I'm learning to take control.

No one came with their golden halo, and a rope didn't fall from the sky. I slowly climbed out the pit, and I learned to leave it all behind. And the slope was slippery, and I fell a few times, but I choose to face him now, and tell him I survived. And I cleanse myself of where the souls of the dead dragged me by my feet, and I washed off the weight of words never meant to be spoken, and things never meant to be seen.

I still chase butterflies, I still see sheep in the clouds. And sometimes I see her reaching out to me, to bring me back to the haunted house. I take her hand and she leads me there, and it all comes back to me. But I don't drop to the floor, and I don't murmur or cry, I face the little girl, and tell her she'll survive. Meanwhile I'll live, for that very girl inside me, and I'll show her the good side of the world, and make up for everything. I'll dare to dream the wildest dreams and I won't hesitate to jump when I see something exciting. I'll learn to fix the broken, or at least turn it to something good. I am what I make of myself, and not what I've withstood.



I'll make it through the motions  
While I hold her hand in mine,  
And I look behind to declare,  
We made it out alive.

## Barbara Jane Reyes: Contemporary Writer, Ingenious Poet

by: Anne Rozel DG. Bernardino

*"She will not appease you, but with the fire you once took to her flesh, she will melt down your weapons, forge her own gods, and adorn her own body."* — Barbara Jane Reyes, Poeta en San Francisco

Barbara Jane Reyes was born in Manila, Philippines in 1971. She was 34 when she published *Poeta en San Francisco*, a book of poems and testaments that would go on to win the James Laughlin Award of 2005 from the Academy of American Poets. She also wrote *Diwata*, a poetic reimagining of the Filipino deity and noted as a finalist for the California Book Award, *Aswang*, poems of Pinay tragedy and perseverance, and her most recent work—*Letters to a Young Brown Girl*, a book that entails feminism and fighting against misogynistic oppression, which was published in the year 2020. In addition, she wrote part of *Rachelle Cruz's God's Will For Monsters*, a poetry book that won the American Book Award in the year 2018.

*Poeta en San Francisco*, her award-winning tour de force of a book, and the one that I personally consider is her best work, is a poetry book that explores various topics that narrate war, Philippine colonialism, and both interpersonal and historical violence against Asians. It explores how religion has been and is both used & abused, and how its messages are intentionally misconstrued by various parties for their own gain. From the very first poem, Reyes delves into life during the Philippine period of Spanish Colonialism—how brutality & bloodshed were prominent, and how religion, specifically Christianity, was forced upon all Filipinos. This highlights the experiences of the nameless victims who were lost in history. *Poeta* is in no single translation—it features English, Tagalog, Spanish, and even Baybayin. Throughout *Poeta*, we witness the conflicting and intersecting trajectory of culture, self, and history, and are met with unapologetic poems that strike like bayonets. She ingeniously portrays culture and history in today's society, and shows her greatly-established view on Asians' experiences in America through unfiltered words that deserve more recognition than granted. Her writing is commendable, but equally so is her honesty and courage to speak up about the truth with her own voice.





## Individuality: Finding and Honing Your Hidden Talents

by: Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

Oxford Languages, Google's English dictionary and the world's leading dictionary publisher, defined individuality as the quality or character of a particular person or thing that distinguishes them from others of the same kind, especially when strongly marked. Its synonyms included uniqueness, originality, singularity, and more. One of the telltales of one's individuality has to be their talents and skills. It is important for you to establish a sense of self by recognizing your flair so as to find purpose.

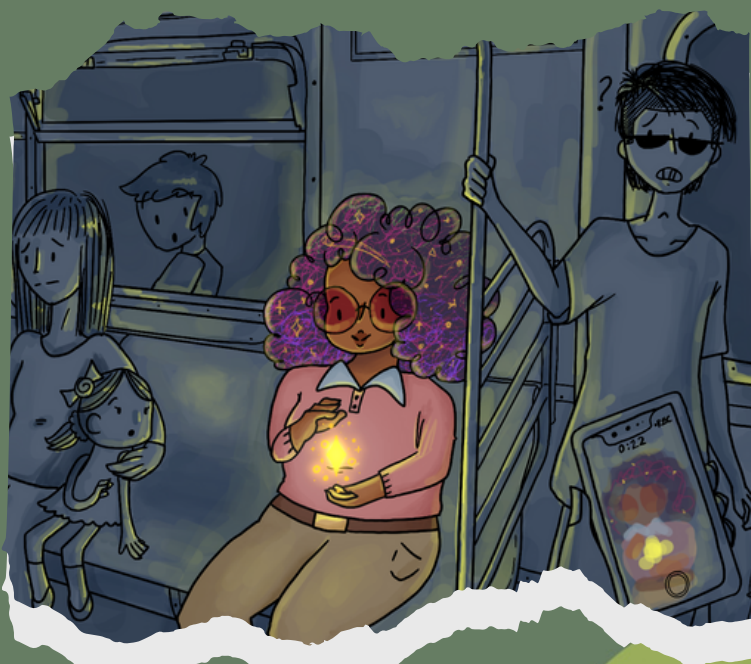
If you've ever found your mind to be vacant of thoughts when someone asks you what you do best, then I think it's time that you identify what you love doing. In 2018, Ashley Moor of Best Life magazine stated that it wasn't until the filming of Tomb Raider that Angelina Jolie discovered she was good at throwing knives. If you think about it, had she not taken the opportunity to be on that set and film the movie, she wouldn't have learned of that hobby.

Imagine if you keep taking opportunities that come your way. Finding talents may require considerable time and effort because recognizing what you love sometimes doesn't cut it. A lot of people are not so sure about what they actually love doing and so they're left with finding circumstances to be put under to know what they actually enjoy doing. Once you identify it, it's up to you how you're going to be honing it. It would be such a colossal waste if we don't utilize it the right way. In Angelina's case, I think we can all agree that she has such an exceptional skill but did you know that her former husband, Brad Pitt, had to enroll her in anger management classes because she reportedly 'keeps her cool' by blade-throwing? A source claimed that she had been known to throw knives whenever she would get angry.

If you were to use your talent for malevolence and selfishness, then that isn't honing talents at all but rather fostering a self-serving attitude.

Remember that talents can easily be practiced and honed but if used wrongfully will bring your growth and progress to a harsh halt. Remember, the goal is to hone not to be dull.

Finding and using your hidden talents will give you a sense of purpose. According to ABC News, Angelina would get paid more than \$10 million a picture yet she still felt a void in her life. She was vocal about how everybody needs a sense of purpose. She only established a sense of self when she used her resources from capitalizing on her skills and talents in helping refugees around the world. She had to unravel her hidden talents before she could find fulfillment. Because of this, she goes on to embody individualism. She remains part of 'Hollywood's elite' and is highly acclaimed up to this very day.



The world is quiet and still,  
Though one I could not feel.  
No crimes as they promised,  
But why is freedom tarnished?

## Polluted Hierarchy

by: Leola Jane L. Buan

The trees remain standing,  
We have a law for planting.  
Must be watered and groomed,  
For they make money bloom.

A world run by leaders,  
Though some are called pleasers.  
All for the people, they shout,  
But exceptions are loud.

The wealth assured for the poor,  
Made as designers the rich wore.  
Gone is the money of the people,  
Starved and homeless, this is lethal.

Equality advocated by elders,  
No actions, it's just a gesture.  
Equality is for the power,  
Enjoyed by people on the tower.

In a place for learning,  
We must condemn bullying.  
But, if a title you reach,  
It's called freedom of speech.

Hush for the youth,  
All heads must stoop.  
Complaining is only for the old,  
Obedience for the students they hold.

Age governs the ratio of respect,  
The world's biggest defect.  
Children on the lowest stand,  
Must look up to the older man.

Bruises they get,  
"It's their fault, don't fret."  
They're the parents, you must listen,  
You are just their children.

A world of status defines us,  
Identity and purpose it entrusts.  
Social order ties us to reality,  
A prevention from insanity.

This hierarchy cannot be perfect,  
It is run by people who are imperfect.  
Endure the corruption and abuse,  
But can never be the chaos of no rule.

## The Meditations by Marcus Aurelius

by: John Anthony S. Luna

The Meditations is a collection of personal writings by Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. These private notes provided him with advice and comfort, as well as reflection of his unorganized thoughts written over 19 years. Several points are repeated here and there, displaying various stages of his life; with that said, he never intended for his writings to be published.

Taking inspiration from the wisdom of the past is always good; we should develop an appreciation for the works of the ancients and the philosophers of old whose works form the foundation of our civilization. With the confusion and degradation seemingly apparent in this modern age, we can look to the past for guidance to pave the way for our future.

Thankfully, this book contains many relevant lessons—which, even if we were never meant to read, should still be taken to heart; invest in yourself and never wander without purpose. His talk of self-control is reminiscent of the writings of Plato, and indeed The Meditations is fundamental to stoicism.

Adversity is part of nature; it will always exist but these trials and sufferings make us stronger, and we should be thankful that we encounter and overcome them. Life is short, do not waste it. We have one life and we should live a good one. When you do good, see to it that you do it as a joy rather than simply because it's right.

These are timeless works relevant even to this day, and I think that the Meditations, written by someone who shouldered the burden of an empire will help us become better people.

*"Put an end once for all to this discussion of what a good man should be, and be one."*



*MOJENO*





## Burnout in Social Media

by: Leola Jane L. Buan

Ting, her cell phone buzzed,  
Click, click! Her fingers taps;  
Checking her phone while the toilet flush,  
Browsing through Tik Tok while she sat.

She stands and washes her hands,  
The screen's light never left her face;  
The phone still in her hand, she pulls up her pants,  
An ordinary scene done at a steady pace.

She walks but never lets her phone down,  
Her unblinking eyes glued to the screen;  
Devoid of emotion but there is a frown,  
A common theme for every teen.

There on the screen, a lady dancing,  
A flat stomach with a must-have waist;  
A sight like a warning for the teen starving,  
"I want to be her," she enviously states.

Swipe, swipe, swipe,  
Another 15-second clip;  
A teen in his pricey flight,  
Complete with his Gucci drip.

A falsified reality her mind now has,  
Yearning for an aesthetic life;  
Four seconds, Four minutes, Four hours have passed,  
Yet she stayed in bed and browsed until five.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Saturn is the only planet in our solar system that is less dense than water. It could float in a bathtub if anybody could build a bathtub big enough.

NASA

Six hours with less self-esteem after,  
Opened Twitter, the opposite of Tiktok;  
Everyone's depressed, an absence of laughter,  
Full of painful tweets, she is stuck.

Countless people pleading for help,  
But swipe she can only do;  
Hopeless and useless she felt,  
What can a jobless teenager do?

"Turn off the phone," she was told,  
But fear and guilt overpowered her;  
Life paired on the phone she holds,  
Fearful of missing out or losing a follower.

A great sin if one presses the power button,  
It is like ignoring the cries for help;  
Black images and goodbye notes never forgotten,  
Exhaustion and pain she felt.

Finally, the screen darkened,  
The battery reflects her energy;  
Yet her heart remains tightened,  
Social media tainted her reality.

Set limits, set timers, set boundaries too,  
Three easy tips for a teenager to follow;  
But, emotions she felt only she has a clue,  
Drained by social media, she felt hollow.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Surveys show that 90% of teens ages 13-17 have used social media. 75% report at least one active social media profile, and 51% report visiting a social media site at least daily.

AACAP

## Overachiever

by: Leola Jane L. Buan

I have a pretty friend with such a quiet voice,  
She always sounds timid yet so poised;  
Likes to give me advice, she never stays quiet,  
But always away from everyone's sight.

A true mentor, she keeps me on time,  
Procrastinating was never fine;  
Perfect grades to be a perfect student,  
But the goal is never limited to a hundred percent.

Some may say "what a teachers' pet,"  
A people-pleaser that society sets;  
Everyone hates but secretly envies,  
Piles of awards every ceremony.

Some may say she's a cheerer,  
Sometimes a boss, a coach, or a teacher;  
For she shouts words I always hear,  
She's a friend that I secretly fear.

Perhaps a nocturnal, she keeps me awake at night,  
Reminds me of the deadlines I must fight;  
Even in my dreams, she lists tasks,  
Tries to shake me into doing them fast.

However, don't mistake an empty to-do list with content,  
Free time must be continuously spent;  
Advance reading, knowledge is wealth,  
Bonus points are worth the deteriorating health.

In music, in school, in everything I do,  
She's there to question and for me to rue;  
An overachiever committing an error,  
Seen as useless and inferior.

"Integrate sin cube x times dx"  
"Why can't you accomplish a simple test?"  
"You scored 100, why didn't you score 101?"  
"You were in second place, can't you be the top one?"

She made me terrified of flaws,  
Resting seemed like putting success on pause;  
Out with my friends, I am not happy or fine,  
My mind lingers on the wasted time.

Skipped meals, stopped sleeping,  
I must excel in everything;  
Compliments that was once motivating,  
Became characters forever daunting.

Schoolwork and emails haunt me more than ghosts,  
This is what she taught me, I must boast;  
Medals became my only personality trait,  
I am an overachiever and this is my fate.







## Ikigai: The Reason for Being

by: Gweneth D. Dizon

'Ikigai' is a Japanese concept that means your reason for being. 'Iki' in Japanese means life and 'gai' describes value or worth. Your ikigai is your life purpose or your bliss; it is what brings you joy and inspires you to get out of bed every day. May it be the silence of an empty corridor or the roaring echoes from a crowded room, the beauty of minimalism or extravagance, the melodious hymns of lyrical poetry or the booming electronic dance music—or whatever makes you feel ecstatic—what is your ikigai? The IPSA Gazette staffers shared theirs:

ABC From: Ezdraelon

My ikigai is making people smile.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: shibi

I live for people's unique creativity in the self-expression of the arts and letters.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: Chérie

My ikigai includes making an impact on those I have loved and cared for. I only have a sense of purpose when I'm useful to people.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: Clover Field

My Ikigai were my grandmothers, who passed away last year. Their wish was for me to live a happy and meaningful life.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: A.

My pets. My pets. Whenever I see them, they trigger this sense of duty. As cliché as it may sound, they motivate me to be better and do acts of charity. My actions affect their lives and future, and so, I want to be the best version of myself and provide them with the best of everything. (which is why I think of my pets in every decision)

(They're literally my #1 priority, or it's kinda like I'm living for them, and I'm fine with that and I'm seriously panicking with the whole climate change situation, my pets don't deserve this ☺🐾)

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: bleughh

Warm coffee, delicious eggs and spam for breakfast, and newly washed laundry. They all say, "Good morning! What a time to be alive!"

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: Jesz

My ikigai is where my friends and family are. Being able to spend time and create lasting memories with them motivates me to venture out and make more memories.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: zenithe

I am intrinsically driven by my love for others, as well as their love for me.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: monchi

'What do you want to be when you grow up?' was a question I was asked as a child. I recall having a great desire to work in the medical field, almost as if it were a calling. It started with being a nurse which changed to becoming a doctor. As I grew older, I became more aware of issues such as gender discrimination; in summary, my ikigai is to become an ob-gyn, or obstetrician-gynecologist, so that I can support and empower women. Maybe it's also because I've always wanted to be surrounded by more life, it haunts me to see someone get heartbroken because of death. All I can say is that my desire and passion are what inspire me to keep going.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: Moon

Being given a chance to live in a beautiful world, I will forever carry this purpose of creating value through the accomplishment of my goals.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: binibini

The happiness experienced while living is my motivation to wake up every morning. Being able to help and bring joy to other peoples' day is an assurance that my existence has a purpose.

Send #myikigai Back

ABC From: VAR

My ikigai is having my family support me in whatever endeavors I take, and I wish to support them in return.

Send #myikigai Back





**ABC** From: Fork from Hello Kitty disrespector

It is the people I love and cherish and the future I seek to secure for them that keeps me going.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: bromeliaceae

My ikigai is to help people around me realize their potential. I love seeing people dear to me succeed and enjoy life.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Enricky Hill

My ikigai—my 'reason for being'—is to find a reason for being.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: pomegranate

Helping our countrymen achieve their liberty and for them to be freed from what binds them from being happy.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Jay

Things that get me up in the morning are (1) to make every day worth living and (2) to know that each step gets me closer to becoming a doctor

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Aika

Living for tomorrow's uncertainty, endless inspiration, and stories of people's aspirations, the art I can show to describe them.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: juys

My ikigai is everything that gives colors to my everyday life. The food, my friends, our silly talks about the future, the things we want to have, my family that supports me.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: L1kesU

I still have a lot of things I want to accomplish, one of which is making memories with the people I love. It's what gets me through each day.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Jimmy Thee Stallion

My ikigai is simply not knowing my life purpose. Every day is unexpected, and that idea is precisely what makes life worthwhile. It's the knowledge that you never know what will happen tomorrow or today. My ikigai is to just experience everything through the various stages of my life. It's simply amazing how humans just exist; there's this small ball known as Earth in the vastness of the universe, and we're just there.. - It appears frightening, but that is precisely what makes it humane, so we must make the best of it in every way.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Alastair

Knowing that every day I live, productive or otherwise, to be able to write and follow my passions is what gives me the motivation to get out of bed.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Alaska

Finding joy in the little things—that is my ikigai. Whether it's waking up at 6 am eating my cornflakes for breakfast, or reading my book at 3 am, it fills me with momentary bliss.

Send #myikigai Back

**ABC** From: Sushi Puri

The little things in life that spiral into treasured memories, such as a delicious scoop of ice cream, beautiful sunny weather—perfect for walking my dog, cherished passions/hobbies, unconditional love, listening to my favorite songs/singers, reading a cliché romantic novel, genuine laughter, and deep/real conversations exchanged, are my Ikigai.

Send #myikigai Back



## Your Warm Embrace

by: Leola Jane L. Buan

A field full of life, my eyes charmed by the colors,  
Everything's bright, designed by smiling flowers;  
A dreamy scene I have been yearning,  
And yet, aware of the dream mocking.

Awaken by my own shivers,  
Startled by the sudden stream of a river;  
The waves I cannot see nor hear,  
But my fingers noticed the familiar tear.

You're gone again before we even meet,  
I miss your embrace full of comforting heat;  
Even a dream cannot fathom your enticing light,  
Nothing can emulate that once summer's sight.

Days and nights, you're still not here,  
Left me alone in darkness and fear;  
You're my friend, my only motivation,  
Without you, my life is in slow motion.

Morning, school, sleepless nights,  
Everything is slower as I cry and write;  
Blank notebooks but wet from crying last night,  
Something is pulling me which I cannot fight.

Failing grades, yet I appear unbothered,  
Perfect grades are now viewed as a simple ladder;  
I am tired, no energy to spare,  
No one understands, this is not fair.

They do not see the harshness of the winter,  
Blinded by the beauty of the blue sinner;  
Disguised with Lofi music and scented candles,  
Only I feel the ugly darkness that no one can handle.

It is the afternoon, I finally see you,  
But your yellow light is replaced with a blue hue;  
I beg the gods for at least one day,  
To hug you and for you to stay.

Hurt I felt from the absence of your light,  
Stung me worse than a frostbite;  
Terrified of tomorrow's sky,  
Will I see you shine as the birds fly?

Come back to me, please,  
Shine your warm light that once put me to sleep;  
Leave me no more for I cannot live,  
Without your warm embrace, I am weak.

## Work Smart, Not Hard

by: Sunshine Grace R. Salanguste

Quick disclaimer: This is not in a form of encouragement to neglect your responsibilities or tasks. If anything, this will hopefully make things easier for you. This applies to everyone - young or old, working or studying. For as long as there is a task to be carried out, one should come up with ways that are actually efficient. So, how do we exactly execute our plans and goals with actual productivity?

Of course, diligence is a great virtue one should have. To be diligent is to be highly conscientious. You've set your eyes on the prize, if you will. The desire, inspiration, ambition (you name it!) is there. With motivation piling up giving you enough reasons to keep you going, diligence is enough. However, there will come days when you'll lose sight of what you're even trying for. Why am I running the race in the first place? Where is this path leading me to? How am I supposed to get there in time? When do I know giving up should be an option? What more risks should I take before I get there? Diligence only works when your head is in the clouds but also in the clear. You only have it when you have the courage and fortitude. Diligence just sounds like something you have to maintain, therefore something you have to also work hard for.

Once diligence wears off, you can replace it with persistence. Persistence is said to be the obstinate refusal to give up or to let go. Maybe you aren't motivated, but you are disciplined. It's endurance despite losing your strength of mind. This comes in handy when you have nowhere to get strength from, yet you find yourself still working. You aren't let down by discouragement because you are beyond that. Forget being motivated, stay disciplined! For you, losing the love for work or studies is like navigating through a dark tunnel, knowing that if you keep going, you'll be out into the broad daylight soon enough. Persistence is unceasing with almost no exhaustion. Of course, no one is exempted from exhaustion but by exhaustion, I mean mental exhaustion.

The efficacy of your every effort and time in carrying out a task also lies in your performance. Throw away the habit of stressing over problems that can be solved. I am aware that it is a lot easier said than done but it's crucial that you use your energy in making a remedy instead of moping. Restlessness is a pile of hollow blocks hindering you from getting to where you're headed. You'll feel it every now and then but don't let it drive you. You steer your way out of this without bottling up and disregarding emotions but to deconstruct a destructive mentality.

We tend to overvalue and overestimate exhaustion when working. It is when we're tired that we feel like we've done enough – and maybe we have, but it's actually not entirely what productivity is supposed to be about. Productivity is the efficacy of our work, not the effort we put in it. There is nothing wrong with exertion for as long as it contributes to the efficiency of our work. However, if being yielded and drained is our idea of productivity, then we aren't as fruitful as we thought we were.



*Shirley Mojeno*

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