



Siesta

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Siesta

Ano'ng tamang timpla ang
makapagbibigay sa'tin ng pahinga?
Matapang ang bawat araw na mas
pinipiling bigyan ng espasyo ang
paghinto, at pagyakap sa mapayapang
sandali—pagtugon sa paanyaya ng
katahimikan—banayad na pagsunod
sa ritmo ng buhay. Marahan tayong
inaanyayahan na lasapin ang init ng
buhay nang walang pagmamadali.

Dibuho ni Jeferson Pangan

TRUTH COURIER

The Official Student Publication of La Consolacion University Philippines

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hindi naman ako mahilig sa kape at sa kakaibang timpla nito. Pero simula't sapul, malaking tanong sa akin kung bakit hilig ng mga nakatatanda ang lasa ng kape tuwing tanghali.

Minsa'y kahit tirik ang sikat ng araw, tuloy sa paghigop si lolo ng Kapeng Barako. Kita ko rin ang kagalakan ni lola sa bawat lagok ng kapeng may gatas sa kalagitnaan ng araw.

Sinubukan ko namang tikman ang mga kapeng palagi nilang iniinom tuwing siesta. Ang kaso, hindi ko talaga ito magustuhan, hindi ko rin maintindihan ang lasa.

Hindi ito katulad ng gatas, coke, o orange juice na paborito ng batang tulad ko. Ano ba'ng espesyal sa inuming ito? Marahil sa aking murang edad, imbes na kilitiin ng kape ang dila ko, pinapaso ito.

Ngunit sa dahan-dahang pagdagdag ng taon sa aking edad, unti-unti ko ring nagugustuhan ang matapang na lasa nito. May kapaitan, pero minsa'y may kakaibang tamis ding kahalo.

Teka, nasabi ko bang may iba't ibang timpla ang mga ito?

Tara,
kape tayo.

GIAN GENESIS ZULUETA
Punong Patnugot





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A RIGGED GAME OF SNAKES AND LADDERS

Art by Nicole Anne Escobar

Step right up, step right up, to play a rigged game of Snakes and Ladders! Where the odds are never in your favor as the privileged climb tall ladders, while the rest of us face ladders with missing rungs and snakes at every turn.

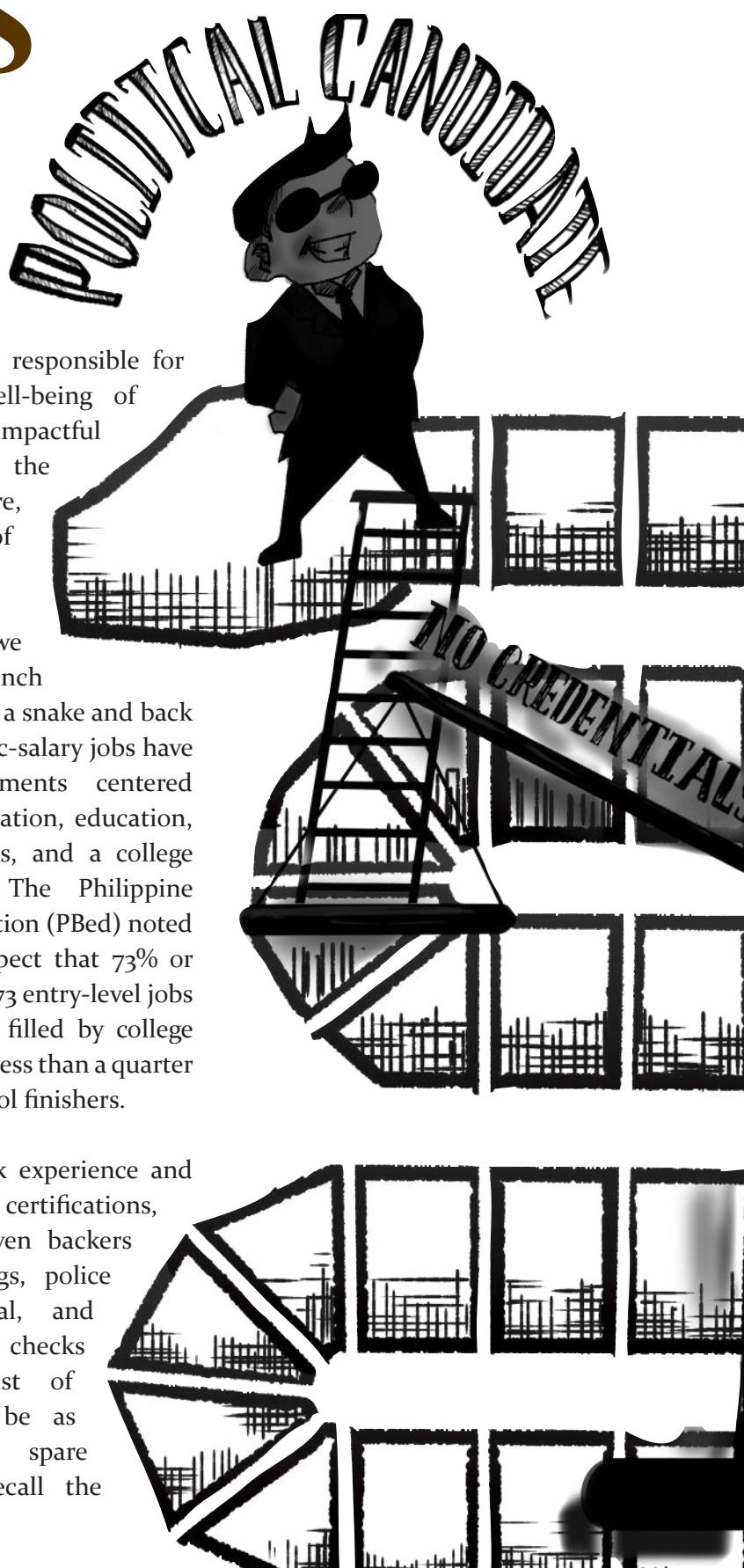
In this land of Snakes and Ladders, the race is not won by merit, but by privilege and legacy. On October 01, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) commenced the week-long filing of candidacy for the 2025 election, from all corners of the country come the aspiring candidates hoping to grab one of the 18,000 positions. With only the bare minimum requirements: literacy, age, nationality, residency—to decide the fate of millions, ordinary workers must be the most overqualified for basic roles.

For them, the board is always favorable, the dice is within their control. Almost 80% of Congress and well over 50% of all elected local government officials are from political families. To play, candidates must meet basic qualifications: they must be natural-born Filipino citizens, registered voters, able to read and write, and meet age requirements based on the position—40 years for the President, 35 for Senators, 25 for House members, and 21 for local officials. Each position also has specific residency requirements. These minimal qualifications are

set for individuals responsible for managing the well-being of millions, making impactful decisions for the country's future, and earning tens of thousands.

For us, we progress inch by inch only to be eaten by a snake and back to square one. Basic-salary jobs have extensive requirements centered on personal verification, education, background checks, and a college degree in tow. The Philippine Business for Education (PBed) noted that employers expect that 73% or 12,544 of their 17,273 entry-level jobs in 2024 would be filled by college graduates, leaving less than a quarter to senior high school finishers.

Requiring work experience and references, obscure certifications, and sometimes even backers to pull the strings, police clearance, medical, and financial history checks to the long list of requirements to be as overqualified for spare change. If we recall the



controversial posting of Potato Corner for a service crew position, the now-deleted post by the Ventura Mall branch required applicants to have a “good visual impact,” “weight proportionate to height,” “clear complexion,” and a “good set of teeth,” among others. Evidently, the qualifications for these basic jobs—primarily affecting the individual and their family—are often more extensive and excessive than those for political candidates responsible for the nation’s welfare and earning a keep barely enough to make ends meet.

As the game progresses, a prominent value

the winners and losers: experience. Experience—defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge—one of the most important assets when applying for a position in the workforce. However, the term “experience” seems to drastically differ in politics. In politics, experience may be their overall experience actively engaged in a political system of a country. For the working class, “experience” often includes work history in specific industries and certifications. For entertainers, experience may be, film credits movies directed or produced, or the kissing scenes they’ve done.

According to a study done in UP Diliman Journals 2015, the probability of celebrities winning in elections was highest among the poor even with little experience in political life and limited education. With more than 30 TV personalities running for high political positions, from vloggers, actors, to veteran actors. Some of which either had no knowledge of governance or subpar credentials, it’s clear that “experience” in politics may no longer refer to qualifications relevant to governance.

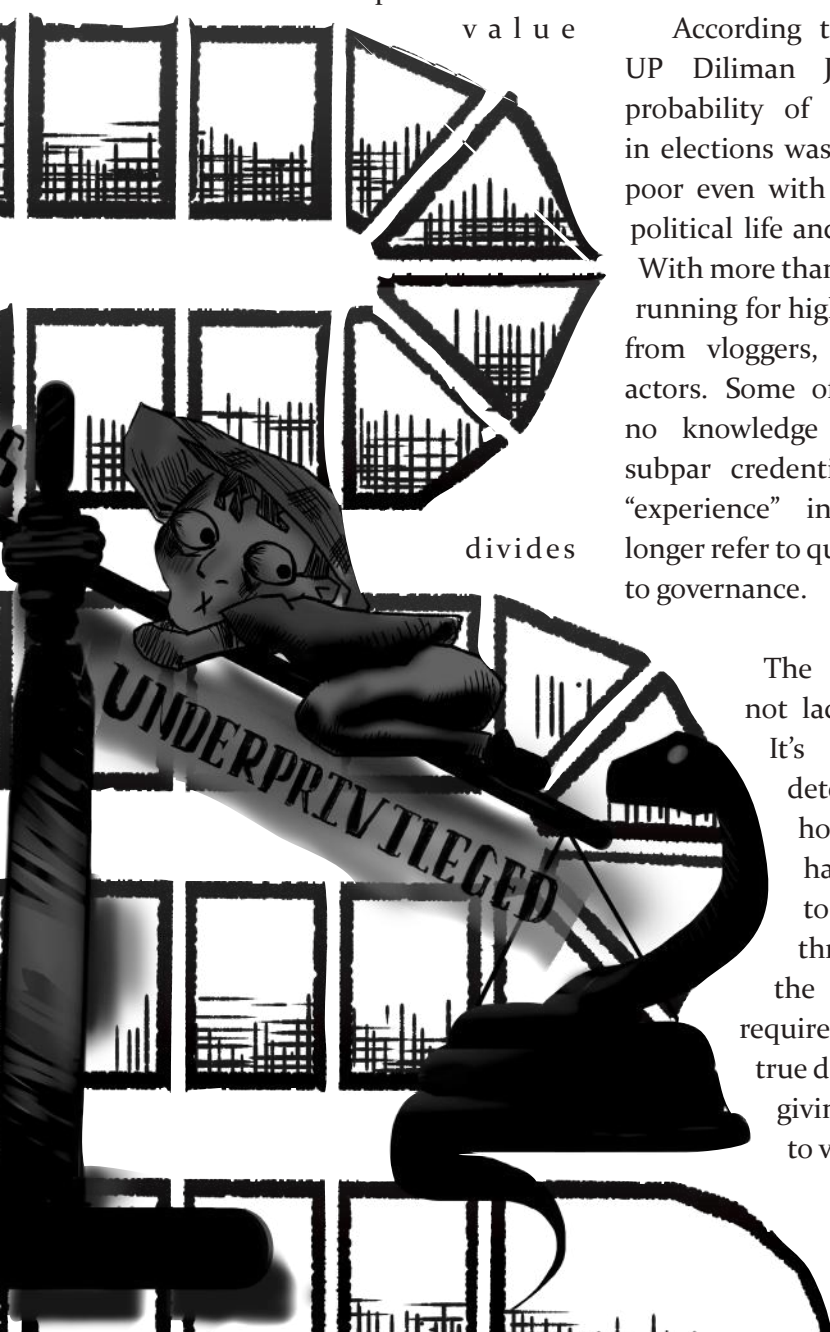
The Philippines does not lack qualified people. It’s that the filter determining who can hold political power has holes large enough to let almost anyone through. Granted, the bare-minimum requirements allows for a true democratic process of giving all citizens to run, to vote, and to choose.

the same board, with politicians and workers appearing at the same starting line. Yet, the illusion of fairness shatters quickly: while politicians get to roll the dice multiple times in a row, low-wage workers step on ladders with missing rungs. Credentials, experience, and qualifications for the positions should take a high precedence. While education alone doesn’t make a politician ‘good’, it can lead to informed, responsible decision-making.

Granted, we are not the only country who have this list of qualifications for political candidates and we cannot easily change what is stated in the constitution so then, as capable-thinking individuals, let us be the filtering mechanism and vote for those qualified or at the very least, showed promise through their credentials matching the positions they’re running for. In choosing your fighter, look beyond the appearances and look at their advocacies, and hold the elected leaders to the highest standard beyond the elections.

If we truly seek a country that will progress and be free from the quagmire then starting from the filing of candidacy—there should be a “hoop”, a preliminary test that potential candidates must pass that they are of sound mind to filter the people who will sit in positions and make the decisions that will impact many. These qualifications should at least encompass education, experience, character, and bonus—a pleasing personality.

We all start on





OPINION



A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

JUSTINE YEXEL PANGILINAN | THE ARCHER

Normalization has brought onto the forefront hitherto taboo conversations on mental health, lifestyles, and career paths. And since it opened in a conservative country like the Philippines where *hiya* - the cultural notion of never wanting to be wrong or embarrassed - often chokes off voices, openness is a welcome breath of fresh air. But do we contribute to a more healthy society by doing that, or are we settling into a thought process of passive acceptance eschewing deeper engagement? “This is just the way it is” has lately been too effortless and often replaces meaningful dialogue. Such an attitude can only bring about trivial tolerance without meaningfully grasping the idea and hence passivity. Acceptance must be brought between embracing diversity and yet informing choices and behaviors that promote the greater good.

This can be seen, for example, especially in the discussions around mental health. For instance, such campaigns have, over time, transformed the face of culture around mental health discourse. In the olden days, people suffering from anxiety or depression would remain silent to avoid constant condescending opinions that they should just “pray about it.” A 2022 Department of Health study estimated 3.3 million Filipinos as afflicted with mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression-an indication of why this is an urgent issue to

be addressed. Such initiatives include the launching of Mental Health for All in 2021-that attempts at normalizing such discussions by widening access to mental health service provision, targeted at reducing stigma by creating community-based discussion platforms. A scenario, as discussed, is also supported by the report from the World Health Organization on a critical shortage of mental health professionals; the country boasts of only two professionals for every 100,000 people, thus emphasizing the imperative need to normalize these discussions in pushing for systemic change.

Versions of raising this noise, such as TikTok, Facebook and Twitter among others, social media sites have created a public space for sensitive issues like mental health - long swept under the rug by open dialogue. In fact, there are about 86 million Filipinos using the internet and social media, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority, campaigns such as #MentalHealthMatters can make a big difference in fighting stigma. In addition to the above benefits, community-based pages and support groups also offer one more advantage to the users: it allows them to share experiences and a feeling of belonging. According to the Journal of Medical Internet Research, social media plays two roles: it can create awareness, but it can also raise miscommunication, meaning that something which is well-balanced and correct has to be spread.

But not all normalization leads to better results. For instance, burnout



But *not all* normalization leads to better results.

normalization becomes an unhelpful narrative -that an employee must work non-stop all of the time. According to the International Labor Organization, it is said that Filipinos are among the working people with the longest hours in the world; their average work hours are 43.2 hours a week, making it very common that people burn out. However, while acknowledging burnout is at least one step in the right direction, treating it as inevitable and thus dismissing or minimizing it when not letting go and gaging through repression - discourages the introduction of healthier work environments or work-life balance in the workplace by both employees and employers.

Another cautionary example can be gleaned through the evolution of the cancel culture movement, which has started as an accountability tool but often devolves into a cycle of public shaming. According to Pew Research, 58% of Americans—and probably many Filipinos because of the international scope of social media—think cancel culture represents overreach that stifles both dialogue and personal growth. Accountability will never be short of its place, but normalization of cancel culture risks giving way to fear in place of open and highly constructive discussion about permissible mistakes.

Normalizers argue that it is a great facilitator of empathy and compassion—and may be exactly transformative. For example, discussions on mental health have enabled people to identify help sources and establish support networks unavailable earlier. Such openness, advocates argue, has broken the barriers for so many and brought the taboo issues to mainstream consciousness. But this gullibility normalizes harmful behaviors such as dysfunctional relationships or coping mechanisms, making the person stuck in unhealthy patterns.

This should make sense for normalization to last in value if it is meant to challenge the people and their institutions to rethink dangerous patterns, redefine unhealthy as normal, and remodel culture practices so that they can become a catalyst for change. Meaningful

normalization occurs when empathy does not serve as a stopping point but rather as a launching pad to effect proper change. A culture of dialogue, accountability, and growth brings openness to a norm, so openness leads to action and understanding grows into effective change.

The normalization of important issues such as mental health and burnout holds a great deal of potential for the betterment of society-but this needs to be matched with the call for accountability and a will to change. Without these, normalization would tend to breed complacency rather than growth. A society must strive to be the kind that not only is accepting of empathy but will hold such acceptance up to positive transformation.

“
Acceptance is powerful, but it must encourage growth-not merely tolerate stagnation. When that balance is struck, the culture can truly move forward on a foundation of compassion and action.

FROM CHILDREN TO CRIMINALS: IS LOWERING THE CRIMINAL AGE THE RIGHT SOLUTION?"

MIA MONICA MAE BAUTISTA | BLACK RAVEN

The House Bill No. 8858, introduced in the Philippine House of Representatives in January 2019, aims to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 12 years old. The bill specifies that children aged 12 to 15 who commit serious crimes, such as murder, homicide, rape, or violations of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, would face criminal accountability if they acted with discernment (the ability to understand the consequences of their actions). For children under the age of 12 and those older children who commit non-serious offenses, the bill mandates that they would not be held criminally liable but would instead be placed in a “Bahay Pag-asa” (House of Hope) rehabilitation facility. If passed, this regressive law will endanger children’s lives rather than reduce crime—it opens the door to prosecuting young children. Rather than promoting rehabilitation and support, it risks subjecting children to the punitive justice system, undermining their potential for positive development and reform.

Lawyers around the Philippines have opposed this bill, one of whom is Atty. Jose Manuel I. Diokno, a prominent human rights advocate. Years passed, Atty. Diokno stated, “children are not yet fully equipped to understand the consequences of their actions, and prosecuting them in the same way as adults

undermines their right to rehabilitation.” — As such, treating them as adults in the criminal justice system, where the focus is often on punishment rather than rehabilitation, severely undermines their fundamental right to receive the support they need for positive development.

This statement, also aligned with Dr. Regina S. Alampay, a respected developmental psychologist, highlights that children’s cognitive and emotional development is a gradual process that continues into their late teens. According to her research, children aged 12 to 15 often lack the full capacity for moral reasoning and understanding the long-term consequences of their actions.

She argues that this stage requires rehabilitation, not criminalization, and lowering the age would ignore children’s critical developmental stage. Therefore, focusing on

rehabilitation rather than



criminalization is essential to fostering a healthier, more productive future for these young individuals.

Furthermore, According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), in 2022, minors were involved in only 4.8% of all reported crimes, with the majority being non-violent. In contrast, adults (18 years and above) accounted for the vast majority of serious crimes, such as murder, robbery, and drug-related offenses. Internationally, countries like Norway, Sweden, and Germany set the minimum age at 15 or higher, focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment. A UNICEF study found that policies prioritizing prevention and rehabilitation are more effective than punitive measures in reducing juvenile crime, as seen in Norway, where juvenile crime rates are lower.

Despite all of these, Senator Vicente “Tito” Sotto, a proponent of lowering the age of criminal responsibility, argues that the rising number of minors involved in criminal activities, especially drug-related offenses, is a serious concern. He claims that many minors are used by adult criminals, and by holding these young offenders accountable, the law can protect society and deter further criminal involvement. Senator Sotto emphasizes that the justice system should not be lenient on young criminals who commit serious crimes, asserting that accountability would help prevent them from becoming repeat offenders and would encourage personal responsibility.

However, lowering the age of criminal responsibility, as advocated by Senator Sotto, overlooks the critical fact that minors involved in serious crimes are often victims of manipulation by adults and lack the cognitive

maturity to fully understand their actions. Punishing them harshly only exacerbates their marginalization and increases the risk of repeat offenses. Instead of focusing on punitive measures, we should prioritize prevention, education, and rehabilitation, which are proven to be more effective in breaking the cycle of crime.

Therefore, lowering the age of criminal is a big “NO”, as responsibility exposes minors to *long-term consequences*, including a criminal record that limits future opportunities and the trauma of being placed with adult criminals.

Therefore, lowering the age of criminal is a big “NO”, as responsibility exposes minors to long-term consequences, including a criminal record that limits future opportunities and the trauma of being placed with adult criminals. Such exposure can lead to bullying, mental health issues, and increased violence, ultimately hindering their personal growth. Instead of early imprisonment, rehabilitation should be prioritized to help minors understand their actions in a supportive environment. Waiting until they are 18 years of age to face punishment allows them to accept responsibility and grow into law-abiding individuals without sacrificing their future potential. — Let us not deprive our country’s children of the education and development they need, as we need them to hone our future, instead of pursuing juvenile accountability.

Let us *not deprive our country’s children* of the education and development they need, as we need them to hone our future, instead of pursuing juvenile accountability.

OUTFIT CHECK! PRESENT FROM GEN ZS AND PAST FROM BOOMERS

ARAH VINNE PANALIGAN | ANG PINALAYA

For the record, I am not committed to any kind of relationship with a toxic boy bestfriend or a boyfriend who will potentially roll out an EDSA-long list of rules. But here I am right now being controlled yet again by the society—specifically the elderly neighbors’ bulging eyes that could easily prey on me. They scrutinize me like I’m Andrea from “The Devil Wears Prada” who doesn’t know what’s the difference between turquoise, lapis, and cerulean blue. But unlike Miranda, these people must have wished that I should have gone with a sweater (in this weather) instead of a sando paired with a short—they’re too short for their liking. Life is indeed a runway, I guess? But I’m not a model—that’s the reality and I refuse to be unsolicitedly scouted for walks I do not want. I have fashion style advice: everyone, regardless of age and opinions, must respect others’ choice of clothes. Respect is this year’s significant trend—would you care to hop on it?

Filipinos use their diverse religious views and cultural backgrounds as an excuse—a VIP card that can cut through walls and boundaries others have left and built for themselves. It makes me think, isn’t it ironic to judge others based on their visual appearance such as their attire all while saying you’re a good person? Shouldn’t love be about being genuine and kind? Resiliency, toxic

positivity, and stereotypes—these three things seemed to have flourished among the boomers and they have more in store. Our country’s rich national historical experiences raised households of older generation where they were shaped according to what they perceive the mold of a good and decent individual the society would love— from clothes, mannerism, values, and decisions in life. Think of your family and relatives before yourself—being selfless is nice and expected of them. And it is needless to say that this kind of thinking is also applied when it comes to their outfits.

In contrast, aside from crop tops, sandos, and fit tees, the amazing and colorful closet of Gen Zs reveals something else—their way of introducing themselves to the crowd—not everyone idolizes the “Maria Clara” archetype anymore as everyone tries to learn the core of who they really are—this happens as they cross towards the Western side. Raised by more open and less conservative parents, the youth of today are living in different worlds. With their outfit checks, we can see that their style is not Filipino-esque anymore, it is influenced by many other countries and a sense of uniqueness. This is something the boomers do not



know as they continue imposing a mostly traditional and restrictive-upbringing towards the younger people—controlling even the garments that the young populace put on their hangers.

It is more than evident to say that it's the generational gap that is making these two groups drift apart. The older ones love the idea of change but the new ones love actual change. In terms of almost everything, the latter prioritizes modesty, comfortability, and what is socially acceptable while the former bets on self-expressiveness, identity, and what they like. One dresses to clothe their body while the other dresses for something deeper—their self-confidence and body image. Physically, the boomers do it with some consideration towards the social norms to not be labeled as 'baduy.' While visually, Gen Zs aim to explore in fashion without fear—they strive to be 'aesthetic' while defining that word for themselves.

Subjects like Understanding the Self, defined 'self' as an entity with autonomy—a body and mind. What somebody chooses to associate themselves with in terms of fashion, clothes, and even mannerisms are all part of their material character. When a person is able to decide for themselves, they live in the true spirit of individuality and identity. Therefore, suppressing others with their sense of style is equivalent to oppressing their sense of self—and it is not a good thing. Will you correct a person on what is the correct pronunciation of their own name?

This is further explained in a beautiful piece of research I have read from the University of Twente—even its title is already interesting, "The Fabricated Self: The Role of Clothing in Identity Development" by Boomsma in 2020. "We can choose to reveal and conceal certain aspects, not only in the literal sense of revealing and concealing our body through clothes but by dressing a certain way," the author related—clothes are not just cut pieces of fabrics sewn together, once it is held against our skin, it becomes a part of us. And nobody gets to take away

any bit of another person—the self remains even amidst a shredding of confusion. Identity doesn't crumble even before the court of social expectations, general bias, and public trial.

But no cloth has no end or zip or button, just like how our attires aren't absolutely free—we need to dress appropriately. This is the belt that will cinch the waist of our suitability concept. Touch the hem of our skirts, is it the right outfit for what we're attending—a religious celebration, an event with dress code, and a cultural occasion that calls for reverence. Whatever genre or taste we have in fashion, respect is still THE outfit and

accessories all in one—this pertains to both Gen Zs choosing proper clothes depending on the happening and the Baby Boomers not controlling the youth of what they wear by default.

For the record, no toxic boy bestfriend or boyfriend or other people should give an EDSA-long list of rules to forcefully manage one's self-expression through

clothes. The society must learn that changes bring more changes and for the last century of the Philippines, it was what happened and is still happening as we speak. Our rich history and different culture birthed a generation with diverse biological and social make up. Life is indeed a runway of a country still preparing for its long awaited progress. As soon as possible, the Filipino society must appreciate the garments of autonomy and self-freedom when it comes to clothes and its societal issues.

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learn that changes
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BALITA



LCUP Hosts Annual Visitation of Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario, Unites Community Despite Rainy Weather

Written by *Marithe Rohvie Cruz and Fiona Chico*

Photo by *Ace Tristan Russel Santos*

La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) conducted the annual Visitation of the Episcopally Crowned Image of Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario de Hagonoy. Students, faculty and staff, gathered at the Our Lady of Consolacion Chapel and Jubilee Open Stage on October 30, 2024 to participate and witness the arrival of

Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario, the rosary walk, and the most awaited Pakupkop rites in connection to the celebration month of the most Holy Rosary. The

procession was led by the campus priest and sacristans, along with students from the Basic Education Department wearing their respective religious saints' costumes, and the various devotees from Hagonoy, while most of the students, faculty members, personnel, and administrators are waiting in the arrival of the saint in the chapel.

After the welcome procession, a eucharistic mass was held at the chapel headed by the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Jovan Kote, to celebrate the visitation and the holy gathering. The College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy (CBEA) Dean, Dr. Paul Benedick Mora, was one of the lectors, as were the various Augustinian Youth Organization members. As part of the encounter, another procession was led by the sacristans, students wearing saints' costumes, personnel, little angels, and devotees from the Hagonoy from the chapel. This procession was conducted throughout the whole campus before it ended in the Jubilee stage where the Pakupkop Rites was held.

Despite the persisting rains during the afternoon, the Rites finally started through Fr. Jovan

commencing the prayer. This was followed by the Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario procession in the middle of the open stage, with a dark blue veil spreading over the event's attendees. This veil was described as the symbol of love and protection of the blessed mother towards her children.

"Despite the rain and delays earlier in the day, I believe this event has succeeded. While many were concerned about the weather, I remained confident, telling everyone that there was no "Plan B" because I knew in my heart that the rain would pass and the event would flourish. And indeed, it did—after the rain, it felt like it had never rained. This reflects our faith here; with the presence of Mama Mary and everyone praying together, we can overcome any obstacle." explained by Mr. Jose Paulo Espinosa, the Director of Integral Evangelization Program when asked about the success of this event.

As the culminating activity ended, the warmth of community and faith filled the air, leaving a lasting impression on attendees. The Recorda de la Virgen 2024 has successfully celebrated the beloved image of Nuestra Señora del Santisimo Rosario and strengthened the bonds among the LCUP community, fostering a spirit of devotion and unity.



LCUP Holds Its First Offline GE-RA Conference in Its 4-Year History

Written by *Leana Roman*
Photo by *Kirsten Camingal*

La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP), in partnership with Globus Education and Research Association (GE&RA), commenced its fourth International Research Conference 2024. Participants gathered in the BARCIE Hotel on November 15, 2024, under the theme, “From Insight to Impact: Cultivating Pockets of Ideas through Collaborative Research and Innovation.” Bringing together both local and international academicians to pool into the pot of knowledge.

Commencing with the key people of the event, Sister Niceta M. Vargas, President of LCUP gave her opening remarks welcoming every attendee to the innovative event citing that, *“Knowledge is a tool to bring meaningful change to the world. Insight is only the beginning; our goal is to transform insight into action, bridging theory with practice.”*

Dr. Puneet Kumar Agarwal, President & Chairman of Globus Education and Research Association gave his welcome address remotely from India, commending the encounter to be a milestone and a unique opportunity to put together some of the brightest minds around the world. Followed by Dr. Mark Rey C. Santos, Vice President for Research and Innovation of LCUP, who gave the objectives of the conference, stating that the event aims to breach diverse fields of study to address global challenges.

Dr. Nidhi Agarwal, General Secretary, Globus Education and Research Association declared the opening of the 4th LCUP-GE&RA International Research Conference in a conference call remotely from India. After the remarks, Dr. Ria Liza C. Canlas, the Keynote Speaker, Executive Member of the National Innovation Council (NIC), Philippines, commenced the conference proper, highlighting the need for innovation emphasizing the Republic Act 11293, also known as, Philippine Innovation Act, Filipinnovation, AMBISYON 2040, and the ongoing initiatives of the NIC. Maintaining

momentum on the importance of research, Dr. Genaro V. Japos, Founder & President of IAMR & PAIR, Inc., discussed the “Power of ‘We’: Collaborative Research and Innovation for a Complex World”, highlighting how collaboration can lead to transformational innovations and a catalyst on innovation. The second plenary session followed, starting with Dr. Joseph Reylan Viray, Director of the Research Institute for Culture and Language Studies at PUP, on “AI Transparency: A Reflection Through Pakikipagkapwa and Human Relatedness” underscoring society’s over-reliance on AI, the need for AI systems to adopt transparency practices to not compromise the trust, dignity, and justice of stakeholders. With that meaningful discussion on AI, Dr. John Paul Caesar Delos Trinos, Chief Scientific Officer at metHealth, shifted the focus to “Innovating the Health System to Ensure Universal Access to Healthcare of Filipinos”. Shining light on the harsh realities of Philippine healthcare and the innovative initiatives they have started in pursuing Universal Health Care in the Philippines.

Expanding on the theme of innovation, Dr. Matrose P. Galarion, the Chief Education Supervisor at DepEd Regional Office III with extensive experience in education and policy, deepened the discussion on “Demystifying and Institutionalizing Innovation in Education”, explaining the rigorous process towards the path of innovation of DepEd region 3.



Truth Courier hosts Inaugural Plumang Agustino, FES Triumphs as Pioneer Champions

Written by *Gian Genesis Zulueta* Photo by *Carl Aldrick Layug*

The LCUP Truth Courier, in partnership with College of Arts, Sciences, and Education (CASE) Council, spearheaded the conduction of the very first Plumang Agustino, a university-wide press conference and academic competition, participated by 15 student organizations from the college department as part of the academic activities during the University Week from December 3-6, 2024.

The Future Educator Society (FES) became the first-ever overall top-performing student organization in the first year of the competition by clinching the 1st overall place for the Group Categories composed of Infographics making and Short-Vertical Video Production, and the 2nd overall place for the Individual categories involving news writing, feature writing, poetry writing, opinion writing, photojournalism, comic strip drawing, and general education quiz bee.

ranking, the LCUP Society of Industrial Engineering Students (SIES) bagged the 2nd overall top-performing student organization by notably taking the 1st overall place for the Individual categories. For the bronze placer, the LCUP Medical Technology Executive Society (MTES) took the 3rd overall top-performing student organization by also placing in the podium finish in the Individual categories.

The LCUP Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants (JPIA) and Communication Arts Guild (CAG) secured the 4th and 5th overall top ranking respectively as the result of multiple podium placers in

Individual events, despite the lack of entries in the Group categories.

Mr. Eugene Fernandez, the adviser of the Truth Courier, expressed his gratitude to the participating organizations for their initiative in joining the journalism event. "Upon seeing your faces here [in the awarding ceremony] right now, I am confident that the future of campus journalism in LCUP is going to be bright," Fernandez said in his opening remarks during the event's closing ceremony. "Now that we are in the season 1 of the Pluma, we hope that we will have more participants for the next seasons of it to come," he continued.

With the success of the event, the Truth Courier and CASE Council is planning to make the Plumang Agustino an official annual event for campus

journalists, writers, and creatives to be held during the celebration L C U P University Week.

Following the



A University-Wide Celebration of Journalism and Excellence | During University Week, December 3-6, 2024, the LCUP Truth Courier and CASE Council sponsored Plumang Agustino, a university-wide news conference and competition in which 15 campus organizations showcased their abilities.

OVERALL RANKING

Plumang Agustino 2024

- 1ST Future Educators Society
- 2ND Society of Industrial Engineering Students
- 3RD LCUP Medical Technology
- 4TH Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants
- 5TH Radiologic Technology Society
Communication Arts Guild





LATHALAIN



NATUTULOG BA ANG DIYOS?

Isinulat ni *Maribel Taroy* Larawan ni *Chaeleth Dominic Gutierrez*

Hanggang kailan ako pasasakitan nglangit?

Sa kulubot kong balat, kurband likuran dulot ng walang patid na pagyuko, pagrupok ng aking mga kasu-kasuan, kawalang gana ng aking mga kamay — tila nililisan na ng kalakasan ang aking katawan. Pinamamahayan na ng anay — unti- unti na 'kong sinisingil, siguro'y kabayaran sa habang panahon kong pagpapagal. Katulad ng ilaw na napupundi, isa lang din akong taong nauubos...napapagod. Nangangapa sa dilim kahit na hindi alam kung nasaan ang dulo nito.

Hindi na sumasapat ang pagdami't paglapat ng likuran sa higaan upang ibsan ang bigat na pasan-pasan. Kulang na ang mga daliri sa kamay at paa kung pagsasama-samahin ang mga araw na mas piniling ihimbing at ihele ang sarili sa kabila ng pagkalam ng sikmura. Hindi na rin mapapawi ng anumang gamot ang sakit na nagmumula sa pagod na taon ng iniinda.

Wala ng makapapawi, buhay ko'y siya na sanang bawiin.





Storge

Biyayang maitatangi ang bawat supling ni aling Rose, 72 taong gulang, walang bagay ang makapapantay sa kaniyang pagmamahal at pag-aalaga sa mga ito. Mula pa man noon, handa na niyang suungin ang bawat bagyo, magdulot man ito ng 'sing lalim ng dagat, kubit balik at niya itong babaybayin para sa pamilya. Sa kabila ng kaniyang pagkahiwalay sa kaniyang asawa, pinili pa rin niyang ipagpatuloy ang kaniyang obligasyon, kaya naman mag-isa niyang itinaguyod ang kaniyang mga anak sa abot ng kaniyang makakaya.

Tatlong Persona

Bagyong Undang — makalipas ang apat na dekadang paghagupit ng nagngangalit na hangin na walang tigil sa pagbagsak ng ulan mula sa mga ulap, bakas pa rin sa isipan ni aling Rose, 32 taong gulang ng panahong ito ang kanilang sinapit at ng kaniyang pitong anak.

Katulad ng ibang bagyo, walang pinagkaiba ang bagyong Undang sa tindi ng naging pinsala nito higit sa kanilang pamilya. Lubos na sinubok ang katatagan at pagmamahal ng ilaw ng tahanan matapos ang pagngangalit ng langit. Dalawang araw ang lumipas ngunit tila wala pa ring nababanaag na liwanag ang buong pamilya — nanatiling kumakalam ang sikmura, walang maayos na higaan, at nakakulong sa kanilang bahay habang naghihintay ng saklolo na hindi nila batid kung kailan darating o kung may inaasahan pa ba silang tulong.

Hanggang sa umabot siya sa ideyang ni minsan ay hindi niya inasahang sasagi sa kaniyang isipan.

“No’ng bumagyong Undang muntik ko na patayin ang mga anak ko.”

Malinaw pa sa isipan ni aling Rose ang bawat segundong lumilipas mula ng maisipan niyang kitilin na lamang buhay ng kaniyang mga anak. Tila saglit siyang tinakasan ng katatagan at pag-asa na muntik na siyang dalhin sa bangungot ng kaniyang buhay.

***“Kasi noong bumagyo wala kaming makain...Pero alam ko tatlong persona ‘yon, kasi hindi gumalaw ‘yung tubig sa’min na hanggang tuhod.*”**

“Kasi noong bumagyo wala kaming makain...Pero alam ko tatlong persona ‘yon, kasi hindi gumalaw ‘yung tubig sa’min na hanggang tuhod. Kumatok siya, ang sabi niya “huwag mong gawin”. Pa’no n’ya malaman na may gagawin ako, wala naman akong sinabihan. Tinatanong ko siyang pilit, ang sabi niya “huwag mo ng tanungin” kasi raw ang Panginoon ang naggabay sa kaniya.”

Matapos niya ‘tong marinig, tila nahimasmasan at nanumbalik sa diwa ang kaniyang sarili — tila nabunutan ng tinik si aling Rose. Lubos na pasasalamat at paghingi ng tawad ang kaniyang ginawa mula sa kaniyang nagawang kasalanan bagamat hindi pa niya ito naisasagawa. Muli ring nagningas ang kaniyang pag-asa ng nagkataong nabiyayaan sila ng kaniyang pamilya ng relief goods na pinaniniwalaan din niyang isa sa mga ginamit Niya para makaalpas sa kanilang sitwasyon.

Nasa Diyos ang Awa, Nasa Tao ang Gawa

Inulan man ng pagsubok

at sinukat man ang kaniyang pagtitiwala, patuloy pa rin siyang tumindig para sa kaniyang pamilya, higit sa kaniyang anak na nasa kolehiyo at para sa kaniyang sarili.

Katulad ng ibang magulang, isarin si aling Rose sa handang subukin ang anumang uri ng trabaho matugunan lamang ang pangangailangan ng mga anak. Mula noon hanggang ngayon, patuloy siyang naglilinis ng bakuran ng kaniyang mga kapitbahay kapalit ng bigas o kaya minsa’y upa upang mairaos ang pang-araw-araw nilang pangangailangan. Dulot ng kaniyang edad, iba’t ibang parte na rin ng katawan ang kaniyang iniinda, kasabay ng madalas niyang

***“Nasa Diyos
Nasa Tao***

pagkahapo buhat ng maghapon ng pagtatrabaho. Kung minsá’y anumang sama ng kaniyang katawan ay hindi niya magawang magpahinga bunsod ng marami pang trabaho ang naghihintay sa kaniya.

“Gusto ko na sumuko. Ayoko na. Hirap na’ko. Gusto mo magpahinga [kasi] masama pakiramdam mo, ‘di ka makapagpahinga...Gusto ko na bumigay, wala akong magawa [kasi] nagpapaaral pa ‘ko,” daing niya.

Tunay na kinakatawan ni aling Rose ang lahat ng magulang — matiisin. Anumang hirap ang kaniyang harapin ay pinipilit niyang hindi umasa sa kaniyang mga

anak — bawat butil ng kaniyang pawis ay katumbas ng kaniyang pagsusumikap.

Wala sinuman ang hindi nakararanas ng pagsubok na dala ng buhay. Sa pagitan ng pagsuko’t paglaban, patuloy na dinadaig ni aling Rose ang kaniyang kahinaan, ang sumuko.

Hindi niya batid kung hanggang saan siya dadalhin ng kaniyang mga paa, at kung hanggang saan siya susubukin ng langit. Sa bawat lalim ng buntong-hininga, nawa’y maging ‘sing lalim din nito ang kaniyang pag-asang

baka bukas ay iba na, baka may pagbabago na.

*s ang Awa,
ang Gawa.”*



WALANG PRENO: NANG IHATID AKO NG AKING PASAHERO

Isinulat ni *Sheica Corcuera* Larawan ni *Janna Mae Galvez*

Tinubos ang mga pagguho ng walang prenong pangarap ng aking mga pasahero.

Nakakulambo pa man ang araw sa kabilang dako ng mundo, babangon na ang haligi ng tahanan upang maghanda sa panibagong hamong haharapin sa maghapon. Isusukbit sa balikang puting bimpo, sabay simsim sa mainit na kapeng barako — ang tapang na laman ng mga arangkada't paghinto.

Sa sanib-pwersang mga usok at bigat ng trapiko, sandaling kakambyo upang tahakin ang pasikot-sikot ng pagpapatuloy. Mga kamay man ay mapuno ng kalyo o 'di kaya'y mangalay ang mga braso, ang isip ay mananatiling walang preno sa kung hanggang saan kayang dalhin ng manibela ang buhay ng isang tao.

Sa siesta ang pahinga — kapag tahimik at hindi na nambabahala ang bulsa, kapag bingi na ito sa kalansing ng mga barya.

Hindi matutumbasang salik sa disentang kita at kabuhayan ng mga Pilipinong tricycle drivers ang pagtaas na presyo ng kanilang mga piyesa. Habang sila'y walang tigil na lumulusong sa anumang lagay ng panahon, wala rin silang pamimilian kung hindi ang kumayod at makipagsapalaran, higit sa daluyong na hatid ng globalisasyon.

Naglalayon mang magbigay ang Pamilyang Pilipino Pantawid

Program (4Ps) at iba pang tinaguriang "social safety nets," nananatiling dambuhala ang suliranin sa kakulangan ng pondo at proteksyon para sa mga tricycle drivers na puhunan ang biyahe upang maitaguyod ang kani-kanilang mga pamilya.

Manibela ang kakasa sa kada amba ng tigil-pasada.

Gulong ng Palad

Tirik na araw, mainit na tambutso, at kakarampot na baryang kita mula sa maghaponing pasada. Idaragdag pa sa pasan nila ang hindi maigawad na pagkiling at biyaya mula sa mga namamahala.

Sa animnapu't limang taong pagyapak ni Tatay Peter "Pedro" Gonzales sa ibabaw ng mundo, higit pa sa kalahati ng edad niyang lagpas-kalendaryo ang mga dekadang inialay sa pamamasada sa kanto. Mula pa man sa Barihan, Malolos, Bulacan, sinikap niyang maihatid ang pitong anak sa kanto ng kani-kanilang mga pangarap, ilang kilometro man ang layo nito.

"Aba, malaki ang naitulong ng pamamasada. Halos diyan ko napag-aral ang mga anak ko at diyan na rin sila nagsilaki. Kung hindi sa mga pasahero, wala talaga akong kikitain. Wala akong ipambubuhay," saad ni Tatay Pedro habang malayo ang tanaw, nagbabaka sakaling may pasahero sa kabilang dulo ng kanto.

Madilim na paligid, malamig na mga gabi, at kapeng walang bahid ng tamis. Walang segundong hindi ininda ni Tatay Pedro ang mga alaalang sa mainit na pisngi ng kaniyang unan isinisilid. Uuwi ang haligi ng tahanan, lumbay ang bitbit para sa asawang labingwalong taon nang hindi kapiling — maagang nagtapos ang kaniyang lakbayin.

Kung iisipin, hindi parating papaimbabaw ang ligaya sa ating takbuhin. Gaya ng gulong na walang sawa ang pag-ikot, minsan ito rin ay maglalaro, maglilibot, o hindi kaya'y magbibiro, tulad ng kapalarang hindi natin batid ang sukdulang daloy.

Liban sa gaspang ng mga lansangang pudpod sa timbang ng tatlong gulong, nayapakan na rin ni Tatay Pedro ang kinis ng entablado nang mapagtapos ang mga anak habang ang bunso ay kasalukuyan pang nagpapatuloy. Sa hindi rin inaasahang pasada ni Tatay Pedro, ang kaniyang mga apo ang tuluyang sumundo ng ligaya mula sa sulok ng kaniyang pagkatao.

"Ngayong maayos na sila, sarili ko naman ang iisipin ko. Hindi ko na sila iintindihin," ngiti ni Tatay Pedro sa imahe ng mga anak na nakaukit sa lalim ng kaniyang isip. Muling sumilay ang ngiti sa ritmo ng mga bungisngis at kulitang walang mintis.

Wagas na Pagtagas

Nang dahil sa wagas na pagtagas ng pawis, luha't gasolina sa mga kalsada, nararating ng pasahero ang paroroonan niya.

***“Ngayong
maayos na sila,
sarili ko naman
ang iisipin ko.
Hindi ko na sila
iintindihin,”
ngiti ni Tatay
Pedro sa imahe
ng mga anak
na nakaukit
sa lalim ng
kaniyang isip.***

Makulay na hugis diyamante sa mga alapaap, karugtong ang sinulid na hinihila upang pabalikin ito sa mga palad. Madalas nga namang naitatanong sa mga bata kung ano ang pangarap nila at kung aling tala ang nais nilang kulayan — katanungang madalang kung ilapat sa mga taong may edad na sapagkat sa mata ng madla, huli na ang lahat para sa kanila.

Kung maiisipan namang itanong, ito’y kung ano ang mga naging pangarap nila noong sila’y mga bata pa. Hindi kailanman kung ano ang kasalukuyang hangarin pagkatapos ng ilang dekadang pakikibaka.

Hindi natin namamalayang ipinagkakait natin sa kanila ang karapatang muling mangarap nang malaya sapagkat sa pagkayod nila’y pinipili nilang iwan ang mga pansariling hangarin upang tahakin ang mga bagay na kasunod lamang ng kanilang unang mithiin.

Antak ng akda ni Lualhati Bautista, peminista at aktibistang matapang ang panulat, ang magkakaibang bersyon ng pagsuko at pagpapalaya sa librong “Sixty in the City.” Mula rito, makikita ang buhay

ng tatlong babaeng inilathala ang istorya sa saliw ng mga magkakaibang wangis ng pakikibaka.

“Sino ang may sabi na may ipinagkaiba ang damdamin ng isang sisenta’y singko sa isang disisais? Walang pinagkaiba ‘yan, magkasingtalim lang ang damdamin niyan ng pagkabigo, magkasingdami ang luhang ititigis sa kamatayan ng kanyang pag-asa,” paniping nagmarka sa likha ni Bautista.

Katulad ni Tatay Pedro na niyakap ang pagiging ina at ama nang mawala ang asawa, magkakaibang hulma ng pagsuko ang ikinabit sa responsibilidad niya. Sa araw-araw na pamamasada, ipinamana ng kaniyang asawa ang palad ng pagiging isang babae sa lipunang mapanghusga — mga kamay na

marunong lumikha, magmarka, at mangalampag ng mga babagtasing kalsada.

Hindi hihinto ang pangarap ng mga pasahero kaya’t walang preno ang mithiin ni Tatay Pedro.

Magsisimulang muli sa kalansing ng mga barya, mga pangarap na minsang iniwan sa unang kalsada. “Ang buhay ay hindi nagsisimula sa pagtuntong sa sisenta. Nagsisimula ito sa bawat ngiti ng umaga,” pagpapalaya ni Bautista.

Tinubos ang mga pagguho ng walang prenong pangarap ng aking mga pasahero. Sa muling pagkambyo sa libong pasikot-sikot ng mga kanto, muling magtatangkang bagtasin ang mundo sapagkat hindi sa pagtuntong ng sisenta’y sinco nagtatapos ang aking kuwento.



Once Upon a Fall:

Deviating from the Path to Happily Ever After

Written by *Leana Roman* Photo by *Chaeleth Dominic Gutierrez*

I was never afraid to fall.

When people think about love, they think of love between two people who will settle down and live happily ever after. Negating the many types of love. Such a thing happens when they see an older, single woman and look at her with pity assuming she's alone in this life as she goes home to an empty cold home as life leaves her by her lonesome. Labeling her in their minds as incomplete.

But love is not what defines people to be complete, it is their choices.

In Beyonce's hit song, Single Ladies, I once thought she was singing for the older single women who never married. I heard "old single ladies" and thought, how thoughtful of Beyoncé to pay attention to them. Turns out, she's more inclusive than I thought when I heard the correct lyrics, "all the single ladies, all the single ladies". Yet, that small mistake sparked a reflection: how society looks on to the older ladies who left the seat beside them empty whether due to life or by choice, the terms "spinster" or "old maid" seems to be something that latches on to them.

That Fleeting Love

When you're young, you're not apprehensive of falling in love, in fact you welcome it like most women in the 1960s. Back then, nearly one in six women who married for the first time were younger than 18. Growing up in the 1960s, Obita Clarin, better known as Ka Obe at 63, lived in Bagbag, Calumpit, Bulacan. She was surrounded by stories of marriage and family, of young brides settling down with the first man they loved. But Ka Obe was far too busy with her nieces and nephews at that time to look up and look around her. Ka Obe would have followed the same path. Find a nice guy, date, get married, have children, and be happily ever after instead, she deviated and carved her own path. As a teen, she had many suitors vying for her attention. In one of her visits with her cousins in Batangas and Pangasinan, she was courted with a lifetime of love. In her naivety, she almost fell for the wrong guy— a man who promised plenty 'til she was convinced to elope. Only, her family intervened and that ended their love story. Life, it seemed, had something else in store for her.

When she grew older, she grew stronger, she didn't even think about falling in love. Ka Obe chose to focus on her family. Her nieces and nephews leaned on her, and she, in turn, became their pillar.

She didn't think of herself as someone who missed out on love or family—she was their “guardian angel.” At that time, she felt invincible like nothing could shake up her foundations.

The Quake That Shook the Foundations

But life has a way of turning the wheel and making even the strongest soldiers stumble. One day, Ka Obe found herself on the floor, waking up in a hospital bed.

As she got on with age, she fell quite frequently as noticed by her family. “Di ko alam kung anong nangyayari sa akin, bigla na lang akong babagsak.” When she first fell on the floor and woke up in the hospital, she felt apprehensive about falling for the first time. Epilepsy—a heavy diagnosis to bear as she got on with age. A brain disorder that causes recurring, unprovoked seizures. A disorder that turned her life upside down as she had to take a step back from everything, adjusting every routine to this new challenge. Her doctor cautioned her against excitement, strong emotions, even the simple joy of coffee—things she'd once cherished. She turned instead to Champion, her now favorite chocolate drink, a far cry from her beloved coffee, but she made do. Her epilepsy became a constant presence, yet she didn't let that define her.

From there, her falls continue, at times, even every day. Her family, the ones she had spent her life caring for, were now caring for her. Her niece would clean her wounds when they had no money for hospital care. Along with her falls came the scars, both big and small from top to bottom.

Isolation? Loneliness? What's

that?

“Hindi naman ako mag-isa; kasama ko ang mga pamangkin ko.”-- To Ka Obe, loneliness and isolation is a foreign concept as she lived her life, she never felt she was alone surrounded by her family and friends. Autophobia, a morbid fear or dread of oneself of being alone, isolated, abandoned, and ignored. For many people, what they fear the most is not spiders, darkness, or any physical thing but rather they fear dying alone.

Her niece explained her Aunt's reason for staying single was that she was apprehensive of men. She had once thought about marriage but realized her true joy lay in nurturing her nieces and nephews. She didn't need a husband or children of her own to feel fulfilled; her family was already all around her. Every morning, she goes about her household chores—washing clothes, sweeping the floors, cooking rice. “Ipinagkaloob niya ang kanyang buhay sa amin,” she continued. Due to her age, she has also been frequently labeled “malimali” from being confused, leading her family to watch over her from afar when she goes out. However, her nieces and nephews are more than glad to give back all the blood, sweat, and tears that she had shed for them.

The Women of Today

Today, women have more freedom to define their own happiness, something that Ka Obe inherently understood and embodied decades ago. In a recent interview with Vogue, actress Emma Watson, a single 30-year-old, described herself as “self-partnered” rather than single.

Today, women are reclaiming their choices, living life on their terms. While it was once common for women to marry young, the narrative has shifted. More and more women are choosing careers, passions, or simply a life of their own. Back then, it was common for women to marry

as teens, have kids in their 20s, and have a full blown family under a home they built. But now, more and more women have put off marriage. The age of 30s is the new 20s as brides opt to marry at this age with some preferring to focus on career or other meaningful hobby. Live-in partners and “fur babies” are becoming the norm.

For Ka Obe, perhaps she was ahead of her time. In today's world, she might be seen as a trailblazer, a woman who lived her truth without compromise. “In this time? In this economy?” is a common refrain for women opting out of marriage and children, choosing instead to invest in themselves, their careers, or whatever brings them fulfillment. Often due to their career, bad past relationships, traumas, high divorce rates— a whole variety of reasons. The choice she made is a choice she stands by. Ka Obe's choice to remain single was more than a decision—it was a stance, one that carried strength and conviction.

A Life of Choice

All her life, Ka Obe devoted herself to caring for her family, perhaps understanding that in a world so focused on pairs, she had already found a place where she belonged—with the family who had accepted her from the start. She was known for her selfless love and unwavering support. As Beyoncé sings in “Single Ladies,” “I need no permission, did I mention,” which echoes the sentiment that women can embrace their choices without needing validation from others.

In the end, it all comes down to choice. These women are fully capable of thinking and deciding for themselves. Like Ka Obe, they choose to settle where they find the most peace, whether that means being single, self-partnered, or simply content with who they are and whom they love.

Para Sa Streets: A Tale of Pavements in Plaridel

Written and Photo by *Arah Vinne Panaligan*

“Pwersa ng Kalinisan laban sa pwersa ng Karumihan”—brave are those who participate in this battle.

Where the scorching sun rays meet the harsh dust on the ground and settle on one’s skin, people along the street continue to pass by—not minding everything that unfolds in a bigger picture. One shoulder clashes with another as a crowd walks in a tight spot, whispers of ‘excuse me’ become too late to prevent the crash. Then a common model of a car with a mediocre driver only stops when a person crossing signals for it to stop, even though he is on a pedestrian lane. In a very small corner, local gossip mongers gather around to make unofficial ‘investigations’ about their vicinity. I believe a town’s story can’t be fully captured using mere fragments of what can be seen—one has to hear its populace’s voice.

Cacophony of Street Sweeping

Collaborating in terms of sounds, the trucks’ horns, populace’s chatter, vendors’ offers, and environments’ random noises all fill up everyone’s ears—creating the sense that they are indeed here, present in the busy scene of Plaridel. But among all these, Arturo “Ka Turo” Baugbog, a 72 year old, had memorized a more distinct piece of music before he retired as a street sweeper—the swoosh of his walis tingting and the silence of the garbage being abandoned on the cold soil. For 19 years, Ka Turo surely had turned many rocks in different pavements and this is while he cleans them off their dirt and trash from six in the morning to eleven in the

noon. But even if he gets to listen to the notes of what’s dirty and what’s not, he can’t control what chords would the people play next.

Pandemic: Rings a Bell

In 2020, the Philippines welcomed a new but unwarranted conductor—the Pandemic, which surely has rewritten many sheets and lives, both for the better but more on the worse—even the most on worst. Ka Turo was still working for the barangay of Banga 2nd back then where he rendered his service for 5 years. He recalled this time when he encountered something that left a mark on him—the type



of when you say ‘quarantine era’ he’ll definitely talk about this. The barangay captain back then called him to pick up a heap of junk left outside that the garbage truck didn’t collect. He supposed that this stack of trash outside a residential house was from a person who died due to the diseases rampant at that time—for this, everyone, even the supposed workers tasked to handle those didn’t take it—it was disgusting and harmful. But Ka Turo, as professional as ever, did what needed to be done—he followed the instructions and got rid of the problem—even risking his personal safety. He swept, then swept, and finally swept—the redundancy showed how he repeatedly cleaned there to ensure that he did everything he could. Even though he sanitized himself after this, marks of disgust and worries could be seen from his face—he was literally on the frontlines of a horrendous disease.

Composed and Written By Fate

Despite him mentioning a task in barangay that he regarded as ‘challenging’ and disgustingly scary, this is the same job that he liked better compared to his 14 years of experience in Palengke, specifically in the wet market. “Maaliwalas,”—translated as sunny and coz, this is how he described it—there is something else in the peace and even in the chaos of the streets—it’s not perfect but it makes you feel like you are a part of that place. Before in the public market, he made sure the corners along the vendors selling pork and different kinds of fishes were clean. Streetsweeping was his sole source of income—he raised his family with this clean work, he also tried being a tricycle driver but time would tell that he was destined to be a streetsweeper—a hardworking, eager, and good one. When asked again and again if he has other what if’s and the chance to get another profession, he refused. Ka Turo will always choose this.

Lost Parts of the Music

Before retiring, Ka Turo’s wage was enough for him and some neighbors even gave him tips which were of great use to him. But there is no such thing as ‘perfect’ music. Surely, he gave his part as a cleanliness composer—he provided wonderful chord progression of his brooms “swoosh” and “swish”, but did the government, the ‘music producer’ gave him what was due? Who would have thought that his decade and 4 years of service would be muted just like that? When he went to Malolos to get his pension, his account balance went silent—it had o balance. Zero. Nothing at all. These benefits now only come as a dream he once thought he would have. His separation pay was literally separated from him. Furthermore, he says that the salary and more benefits for street sweepers and used-to-be-one like him, deserves more than what is given, “It can still be improved.”

Where the scorching sun rays meet the harsh dust on the ground and settle on Ka Turo’s skin, people along the street continue to pass by—not minding everything that he does. One shoulder clashes with another as a crowd walks in a rusty drainage, realistically no whispers of ‘excuse me’ were muttered even after the crash. Then a common model of a car with a mediocre driver didn’t stop even when a person crossing signals for it to stop on a pedestrian lane. In a very small corner, local gossip mongers gather around to pick more of each other’s stories instead of their very own baggage in life. Among these noises, I believe Ka Turo’s story of hardwork and service is the significant voice that can give justice in his town’s storytelling.

Ka Turo fights equally with his weapons— a walis tingting and his motivation to make his barangay a clean and safe space for everyone—whether they are locals or not.





DEBKOM



Prescription Please: Garden, Diseases, and Elderly People

Written by *Arah Vinne Panaligan* Photo by *Janna Mae Galvez*

'No money today, keep the doctor away.'

Have you ever seen the world naked? — where no shining faces of the moon or stars embrace you in the night while you fall asleep. No warm sun rays touch and burn your sensitive skin. No calm and blue waters flowing in a river with its creatures making it alive. No century-old trees swaying the swing attached to it while the wind wishes to cradle it. No pollens of flowers blooming while all bees and butterflies come together and cultivate allurements. Have you had a glimpse of this side of life—stripped off its beauty and still love it equally or even more?

Out of Sight, In Her Mind

Seeing only half of what the world has to offer, this is what Lilian “Lily” Cruz, a 73-year-old mother, has been experiencing and enduring for 6 years now. Even when surgery was done for her cataract, thorns of bad news grew in her left eye, making it twitch and eventually blind—she has glaucoma. What foreign plant can have more potential for poison than her right eye being risked for her eye problem? Possibly losing complete sight because of money is far worse than losing it because of the disease itself. Thorns grew faster while aging completely turned against her, aside from the horrors of her failing visual ability, her vines propagated more rotten fruits: Heart disease, High Blood, Hypertriglyceridemia, and her red blood cells are lesser compared to her white blood cells. In this sullen situation, Lily has lost her control over her garden—her body isn't as well as it did years ago, when she was way younger. She has to look after it better and drink her medicine for maintenance. And it isn't easy—being sick is never easy.

Beat Skips a Heart: What?

To control the growth of her invasive plants,

she starts to nurture potent seeds: 9 kinds of maintenance medicine, to mellow down the severity of her diseases. But a new problem sprouts out, these remedies are expensive and they cut off a large chunk in the old lady's money—an estimated amount of 1,700 pesos per month is not a good view for Lily. On top of that, in checking her body's condition, specifically her heart's, she undergoes 2D echo process every 3 months and this costs around 2,500 pesos in the hospital she avails it in. Even with Lilian, allocating all her funds that could have been spent on her food, leisure, or even a vacation, it isn't enough. So after some time, she decides to buy just 10 pieces in hopes that it will suffice and the next time, she will once again afford to buy another set. This is where the Senior Citizen Discount alongside the less VAT become an occasional hero-duo, they diminish 20% off of the original price—making her pay 500-800 pesos for 10 of her medications in the seed store called pharmacy. But this doesn't erase the fact that it is still a burden—inducing both a blockage on her heart and a cloggage on her financial situation. This doesn't completely save her, specifically on days that there are really no penny or two—she has the days where she is forced by the lack of money to just not take her medications for the meantime—“Thank God, nothing bad happened to me when I skipped my maintenance once.”

On Vines and Veins

One random day, neighbors come to oversee the predicament of Lily's Garden— “Why don't you just get those for free, they are handed out by the barangay or even from our Mayor herself?” She shakes her head drastically with distress, she tells them she tried to do so. Lily gave that a chance—she received and drank generic remedies but it still made her heart be congested and her cardiac nerve crooked. Although science has proven long before that branded pills don't necessarily perform

better compared to generic ones, as an elderly, Lily didn't have precious time to believe in it and acted based on her direct exposure to the latter and it wasn't good. As someone who already has a lot of medical complications, risking more would be like inducing something resembling self-harm. She is happy for others who are receiving help from the local authorities with free medication but she can't join them. Lilian agrees to the call for improvement—there can be more in terms of the aid allocated for senior citizens with health issues. There can be more hands reaching out to care for our elderly people and they will surely appreciate those.

If we
can save

more eyesight and heartbeat, why shouldn't we do it?

A Bitter and should-be-Better Pill to Swallow

Filipinos, known as family-oriented and even regarded as religious people, are far behind the care for our wonderful populace of aged individuals—sure in households, we take in our lola and lolo, but what about the country's supposed healthcare system for them? The histories held on their tongue are as precious as their conditions

and lives—then is this how we repay their love and service for us? We shouldn't let the links between us and our ancestors be treated as if they are objects who have now lost their value. Looking after these elderly should be included in the nation's procedure to progress—everybody deserves to live in a better situation. You don't let someone you love simmer and die in pain—you

give them something to alleviate their sufferings and you offer a prayer for their sake. The Philippines can do better and it should. It should be, 'healthcare today keeps the patients and doctors okay.'

Lily has seen the world naked — where no medications are available in the night while she falls asleep.

No warm sun rays touch and burn her sensitive skin. No calm and blue waters flowing in a river are enough to give her peace. No discounts can be sufficient to what she lacks. No help

is enough to provide her a healing process—physically, mentally, and emotionally as a citizen living in a country where her kind is not a priority. No garden is beautiful enough to nourish in a crumbling land of broken public health yet Lily continues to love everything—clutching on to her cane—holding on to survive one more cut-off for another set of her 10-pieces medicine.

“No garden is beautiful enough to nourish in a crumbling land of broken public health.”



LOLO BREAKS THE INTERNET:

An Unprotected Entity

Written by *Leana Roman* Art by *Nicole Anne Escobar & Ericson Baltazar*

How does trust become a weakness in a world of deceit?

I watch as my Lolo Juan, 73, taps the screen with his forefinger, his calluses clicking multiple faces of the screen at once, unrecognizing its master's actions remain unmoved. Frustrated after multiple tries, Lolo gets annoyed and presses harder but still without a response.

In a world in Ultra 4k HD, moving at 2x speed, the 144-pixel vision of our grandparents captures only yesterday's pixels. However, their children have now grown up and made it their mission to give their oldies an update to connect them to the modern world.

Follow Me and Subscribe!

"Papunta ka pa lang, pabalik na ako," is the favorite line of my Lolo Juan— a fact that I don't dare deny or refuse however, in the digital landscape, it is something I dare gently refute.

Oftentimes, my Lolo would yell at me from another room to put on Doctor Willie Ong, his favorite pastime. While watching, a temptation suddenly reared itself. An advertisement for a dish rack, fully equipped with knife racks, hooks, plate racks, the full package—the ultimate kitchen transformer. The perfect surprise gift for my wife, he thought. One click and he's off bargaining with the seller on

Facebook. The seller, realizing his gullibility, promised him freebies, a guarantee—the perfect product. Little did he know, he and his wife would both be surprised as the package arrived with nothing but random metal pieces, plastic wraps, and a mountain of disappointment.

One thousand and five hundred pesos had gone down the drain. For some, this may be a meager amount but for my Lolo who tirelessly works the fields with miserly tendencies, it's not only a huge hit to the wallet but to his faith in technology.

Ding! tHis is @ L3git t3xt5!

Despite that scare, numerous temptations continue to pop up and float around in every online platform with every scroll.

Unaware of the dangers of phishing, a text message came in. "We need to verify your identity, plis send ur OTP." Confused as he was, in fear that his identity may be mistaken for another, he entered the string of numbers. From there, he followed every instruction to the T, as if taking the most important practical exam of his life, he ordered no one to disturb him.

Ding! Next thing he knows, his newly set up online bank bearing his protected treasure of thousands, lost the digit in front, changing to 000.00. What was supposed for his next meal fed a thief.

Despair, anger, panic, all in the

span of a minute. Like a building in flames, he handed me the masterpiece of his actions. In his panic, he asked what happened to his money. In my disbelief, I read the messages, a list long of instructions that he religiously followed. Like the Little Red Riding Hood, he got swallowed by the wolf. His money, his passwords, his identity—all taken by the wolf in broad daylight.

Where Do Our Lolos and Lolas Fit Online?

For a long time, my Lolo refused to touch the phone. Halting the lessons on using the phone, traumatized by the series of unfortunate events. Halting the evolution and progress in its early stages. Unlike Doctor Willing Ong, who refused to trust the Philippine health system to avoid risks, my Lolo was unable to escape the dangers of the online world.

The National Council on Aging of the United States explains that elderly folks are targeted by con artists and fraudsters as they "believe this population has plenty of money in the bank." But that isn't always true. The unfamiliarity of older people with technology, their lack of awareness about scams, and their naturally trusting nature are the factors that make people like my Lolo prime targets. Thanks to that, my Lolo lost not only his hard-earned savings but also his confidence and trust in technology.

Don't Click That!

My Lolo is not alone, there are 9.22 million Filipinos aged 60 and above as of 2020, as recorded by the Philippine Information Agency, and while any age can fall prey to different kinds of scams, equipping our elderly with the information, even the basics that can alert them of the signs of a scam and the actions they need to do to protect themselves.

Moreover, the government needs to do more than stand by. It should track down the sources of these scams and expand public awareness campaigns to help the elderly recognize potential dangers. In the past two years, 75% of adults aged 50-80 reported experiencing a scam attempt, and 30% fell victim. This will only continue to rise without further intervention.

I watch as my Lolo taps the screen with his forefinger, his calluses clicking multiple faces of the screen at once, "Lolo, try tapping softly," I intervened in his stand-off with the phone screen. Educating them to just "don't click random things" or "just ask if you're confused" is already of great help. Lengthen your patience for it is also their first time in this life. Shaming and pointing fingers at the ignorant will get you nowhere but backward.

Online, trust is just another weakness to exploit.

Nasaan si Lolo?





LITERARI



notion of repeat

by ssarcassem
art by Jeferson Pangan

It creaks, the system,
Like an old door—
 rusted,
its hinges stiff,
but still, they
push it open.
Dust falls,
settling into cracks,
like promises broken,
 forgotten,
 left behind.

Old hands signed the
 papers
with pens that bleed lies,
the ink of years past—
 heavy, tired,
 and still, they write.

Old voices fill the air,
the same tired speeches,
 repeated,
 echoes in empty halls,
 where hope once stood,
 now lost in the corners
 where cobwebs grow thick.

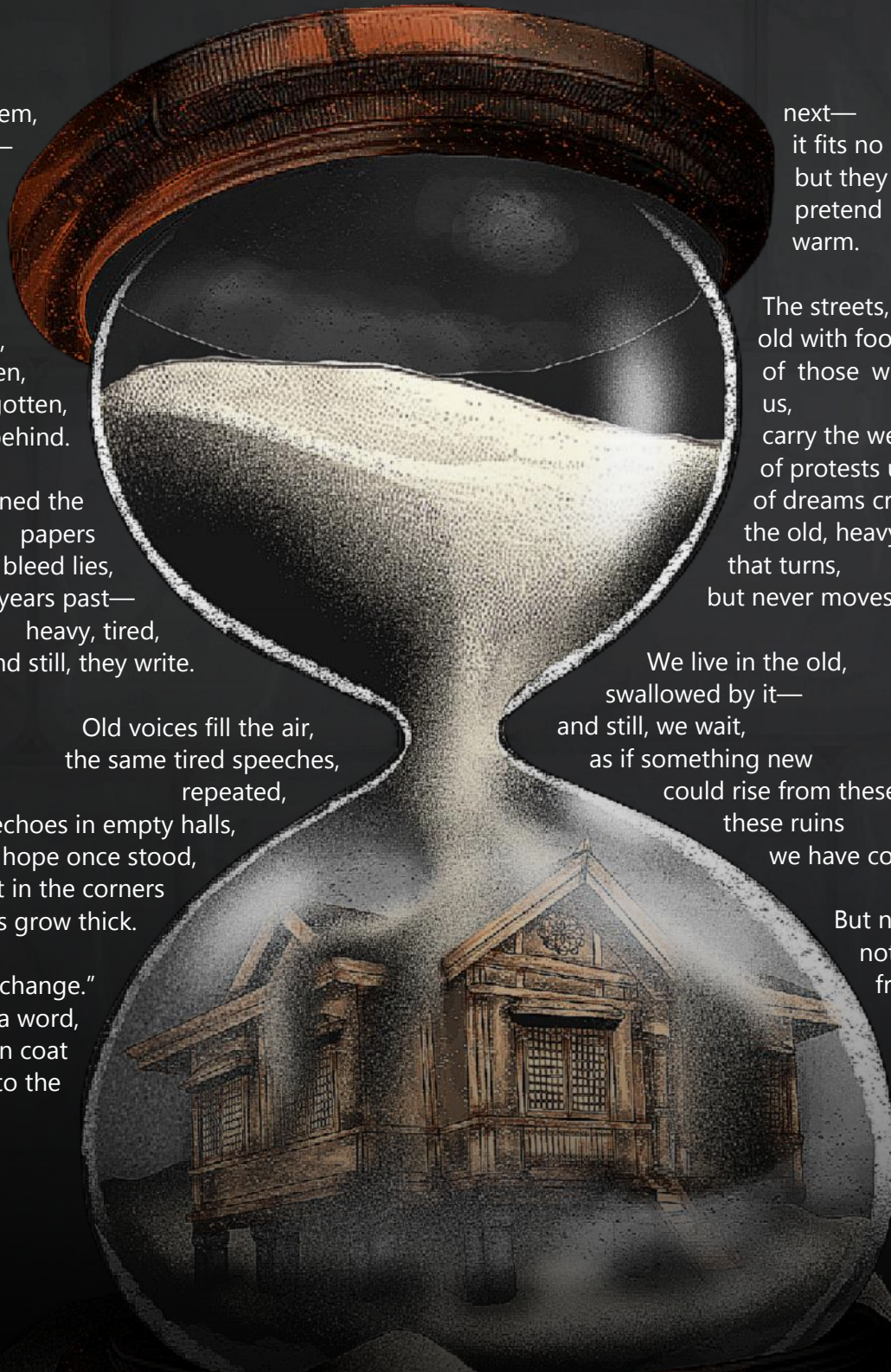
They say, "We will change."
But change is a word,
an old, worn coat
passed from one to the

next—
it fits no one,
but they wear it,
pretend it still keeps them
warm.

The streets,
old with footsteps
of those who marched before
us,
carry the weight of years,
of protests unheard,
of dreams crushed beneath
the old, heavy wheel
that turns,
but never moves.

We live in the old,
swallowed by it—
and still, we wait,
as if something new
could rise from these ashes,
these ruins
we have come to call home.

But nothing changes,
nothing grows
from the soil so dry,
so old,
it forgets how to
bloom.



OBLIVION

by Nicole Villaruel
art by Argel Sadiasa & Ericson
Baltazar

**i long forgotten,
how to be loved.**

i painted a blurry image,
were her eyes 'black'?
did her eyes flicker,
as she dreams?
did her voice,
sound so resonant?
or was it soothing?
as she pleaded with the divine,
as she rebelled in the chaos,
did i still love her?
long as she faded into oblivion,
with no one to remember,
with no one who calls her name,
like a forgotten old memory.

only then—
i glanced at the mirror,
only to remember,
i have forgotten myself.



Hihinga o Mamamahinga?

ni Ketseuki
dibuho ni Allaine Felasol

Ang kandila sa lamesa'y kumikinang
Kandili ang mga salagubang
Subalit---
Sa patuloy na pagliwanag
Ay siyang pagkaubos ng oras


Nais na hipan
Subalit---
Hindi nais mawala ang kabuluhan

Ititigil na ba ang liwanag
Kasabay sa pagpikit ng mata
At ituloy sa susunod na umaga?
O hahayaang maubos at maupos
At habang buhay na mamahinga

ASWANG:

an old myth in the current era

ni Kiano Grayda
art by Nicole Anne Escobar



In a town where you can hear the
buzzing sounds of vehicles,
Where sweeping comes with gossip
passing through their auricles,
There is a young lady who has been in
different articles,
Beauty and serenity are what she
tackles.

But what are the gossips all about?
Is it true what they spout?
She's evil when the moon is out,
Pretending to be goody two shoes
when everyone's around.

I peaked at a small hole in her house,
And my brows furrowed when I saw
her crawl,
Her body is divided into two as her
entrails growl,
Hunger— attention, fame, and power
are what she trawls.

And as her wings spread and fly high,
Victims unconsciously took her bait,
Feeding her with what she desires,
As the darkness consumes their souls
and minds.



ISPORTS



LCUP SPORTSFEST 2024:

Where Champions Rise and Legends Are Born

Written by *Francis Clement Rei Armamento* Photo from *CAMP Department*

The La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) Sportsfest 2024, held from November 26 to December 6, concluded with a vibrant display of athleticism, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. From the intense volleyball matches to the strategic brilliance in chess, this year's festival was a testament to the competitive spirit and unity that define LCUP. With thrilling matches and standout performances, the week-long event ended on a high note, leaving behind a legacy of excellence and inspiration.

Volleyball: CAMP and CBEA Reign Supreme

The volleyball courts were electric as the College of Allied Medical Professions (CAMP) emerged victorious in the Women's Volleyball Championship, defeating the College of Arts, Science, and Education (CASE) in a gripping four-set match (25-20, 7-21, 21-17, 21-14). Abby Mercado, who was crowned MVP, spearheaded CAMP's campaign with critical spikes and impeccable leadership. One highlight was her decisive series of blocks in the third set, shifting momentum firmly in CAMP's favor. Her clutch performances showcased teamwork and resilience under pressure.

In the Men's Volleyball Championship, the College of Business, Entrepreneurship, and

Accountancy (CBEA) claimed their fifth consecutive title in a heart-pounding five-set duel against CAMP (21-12, 21-15, 20-21, 17-21, 16-14). Captain Allen De Jesus credited their success to perseverance and unity, with a standout moment being their relentless defense in the final set, ultimately sealing their legacy as a dominant force in volleyball.

Basketball: Back-to-Back Kings and a Bronze Breakthrough

The basketball arena witnessed exhilarating battles, with the College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE) successfully defending their title as Boys Basketball Champions. In a nail-biting final, they edged out CAMP by a single point, 45-44. The final minute saw CAMP's Adrian Turingan mount an incredible offensive push, nearly stealing the game. However, CITE's resilience and team chemistry, highlighted by a crucial steal and a composed free throw, secured their second consecutive crown under the guidance of coach Ivan Bodoso.

Meanwhile, the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM) secured the bronze medal, overcoming CBEA with a commanding 52-46 victory. Their tactical adjustments in the final quarter, coupled with sharp shooting by their leading scorer, ensured their place on

the podium.

Table Tennis and Badminton: Mastery Across the Boards and Courts

CITE dominated Table Tennis, with Nathaniel Santos and Angelica Pulpulaan claiming the Boys' and Girls' Singles titles, respectively. Santos, in particular, showcased nerves of steel in the finals, outlasting his opponent in a gripping five-set match. In the Mixed Doubles, CITE's dynamic duo, Mykl Villena and Viel Alcantara, displayed seamless coordination to take home the gold, further solidifying their school's reputation in the sport.

In Badminton, CAMP led the charge with Bab Securata dominating the Girls' Singles division, her agility and precision overwhelming opponents. The tandem of Jerome Fernandez and Isshey De Guzman clinched the Mixed Doubles title, with their synchronized play being a highlight of the tournament. CBEA's John Soriano triumphed in the Boys' Singles, reflecting the festival's broad display of talent and sportsmanship.

Chess: Strategic Brilliance Takes Center Stage

The Chess Championships highlighted the intellectual prowess of CITE and CBEA. Adrian Pineda (CITE) and Heaven Del Rosario (CBEA) took top honors in the Boys' and Girls' divisions, respectively. Their victories were a testament to mental rigor, with Pineda orchestrating a brilliant endgame strategy in his final match and Del Rosario showcasing unmatched precision and foresight against tough competition.

A Celebration Beyond Sports

The LCUP Sportsfest 2024 was more than just a competition;

it was a celebration full of unity, perseverance, and the indomitable spirit of its students. Every point scored, every game won, and every medal earned reflected not only individual brilliance but also the strength of collective effort.

As the curtain falls on this year's festival, the memories of hard-fought battles and moments of triumph will resonate within the LCUP community, inspiring future athletes to chase greatness. With this year's success setting the stage, anticipation is already building

for next year's Sportsfest, where new champions and stories will undoubtedly emerge



Table Tennis Stars Shines the Bright at La Consolacion University Sports Fest 2024

Written by *Justine Yexel Pangilinan* Photo from *CAMP Department*

La Consolacion University Philippines Sportsfest 2024 on November 25-29 brought forth intense and electrifying competition to table tennis courts with some of the finest talents in all the divisions and events be it singles and doubles.

Nathaniel Santos of CITE dominated in the College Singles category when he appeared on the boys' side of the table. He was a undisputed champion in precision and prowess that even his opponents who placed second and third failed to do, namely, Franz Taguigui of CAMP and Allen De Jesus of CBEA, respectively.

The College Singles Girls was full of thrills and talent, as Angelica Pulpulaan of CITE took the

championship. Charlene De Jesus of CAMP settled for second place with her flawless performance, while Sidney Gonzaga of CASE ended in third place, giving a good fight throughout the games.

Indeed, the mixed doubles was a real nail-biter as Mykl Villena and Viel Alcantara of CITE outlasted Gabriel Villagracia and Erika Ballelos of CAMP for the top spot with the latter settling for second.

Allen De Jesus and Christine Caparoso of CBEA ended up third, displaying fine teamwork despite stiff competition from the top pairs.

partner," declared mixed doubles champion Mykl Villena. "We trained so hard for this chance and it just paid up during the finals. Definitely this victory was not mine nor my partner's alone, this time it goes for the rest of the team, at CITE."

The success of the tournament not only showed off the athleticism of the players but also the camaraderie and team spirit, which are the core pillars of sports culture in La Consolacion University-from singles to doubles, determination was shown off by the players, skills, and honest love for the game-a true celebration of competitiveness in the sports fest. Table tennis, together with the top players Santos, Pulpulaan, Villena, and Alcantara, has a bright future ahead of it in LCUP.

"This is the fulfillment of our dreams, including mine and that of my



Dominate the Court: La Consolacion University Sports Fest 2024 Badminton Showdown

Written by *Justine Yexel Pangilinan* Photo from *CAMP Department*

La Consolacion University Philippines Sportsfest 2024, November 25-29, was a witness to some of the most electrifying badminton matches the university has ever seen. The students gave it their best shot, doing it all in their battles, whether in singles or mixed doubles.

The College Singles Boys was won by John Soriano of CBEA who clinched through some impressive skills. The player won as champion after a series of dominating games. Soriano's accurate smashes and smart court movement overwhelmed his opponents, including Mark De Guzman of CITE, who won second place after a very close final. Mark Panganiban of CITHM took third place, showing that he can really stand the heat. "It's a really grueling tournament, but I wouldn't have made it if not for my teammates and coaches," said Soriano. "Every match was challenging, but I am very proud to bring home the win for CBEA."

The College Singles Girls also provided a dramatic encounter with Bab Securata from CAMP who was the champion. Consistency, sharp decision, and solid play by Securata won her a very well-deserved first position. Securata was second after an extremely close exchange of a series of games that lasted against MJ Nemenio of CITHM, while Leah Flores of CASE settled for third place. "I am happy about this result," said Securata. "I put much time into trying to perfect my game. This really feels great."

The pair Jerome Fernandez and Isshey De Guzman, CAMP proved to be a perfect pair, making smooth coordination with perfect timing for the championship. No battle was, however tight, and was an encounter as the pair

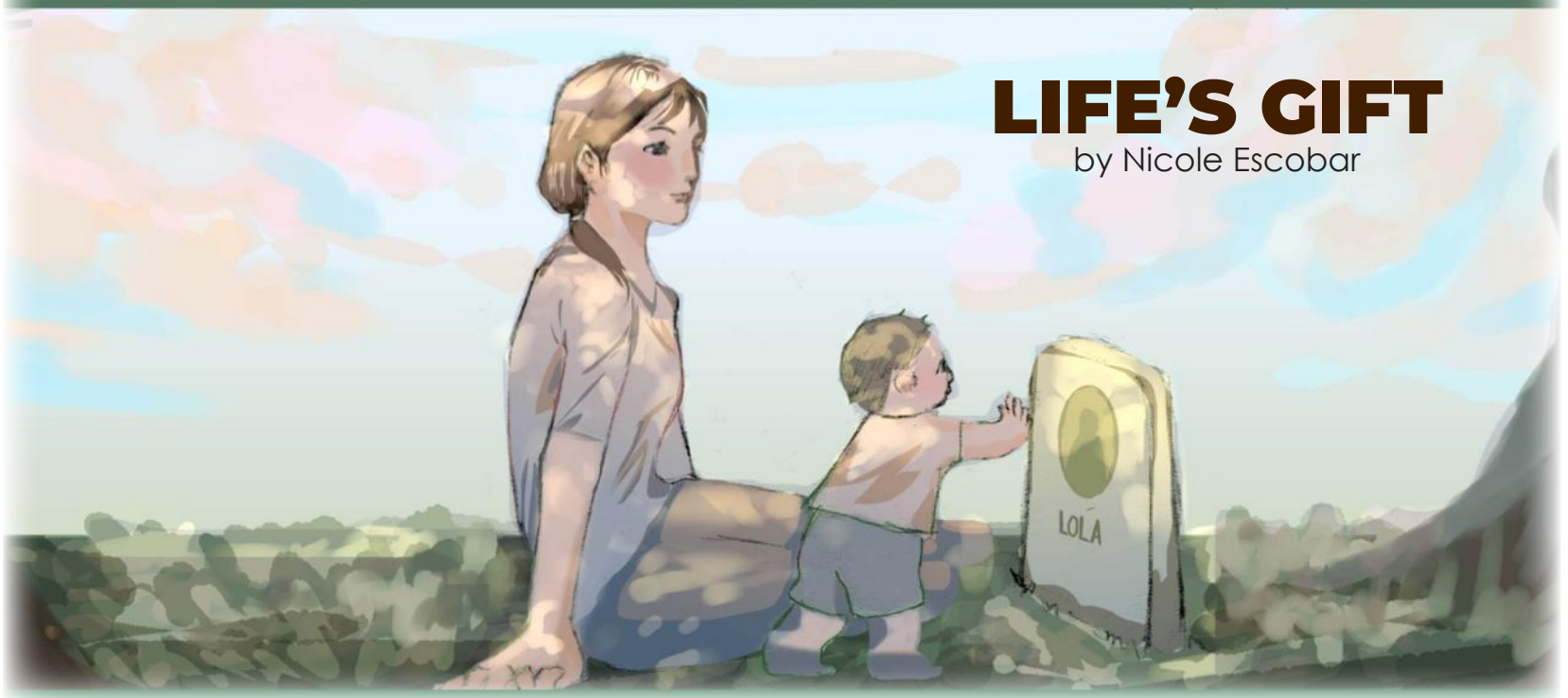
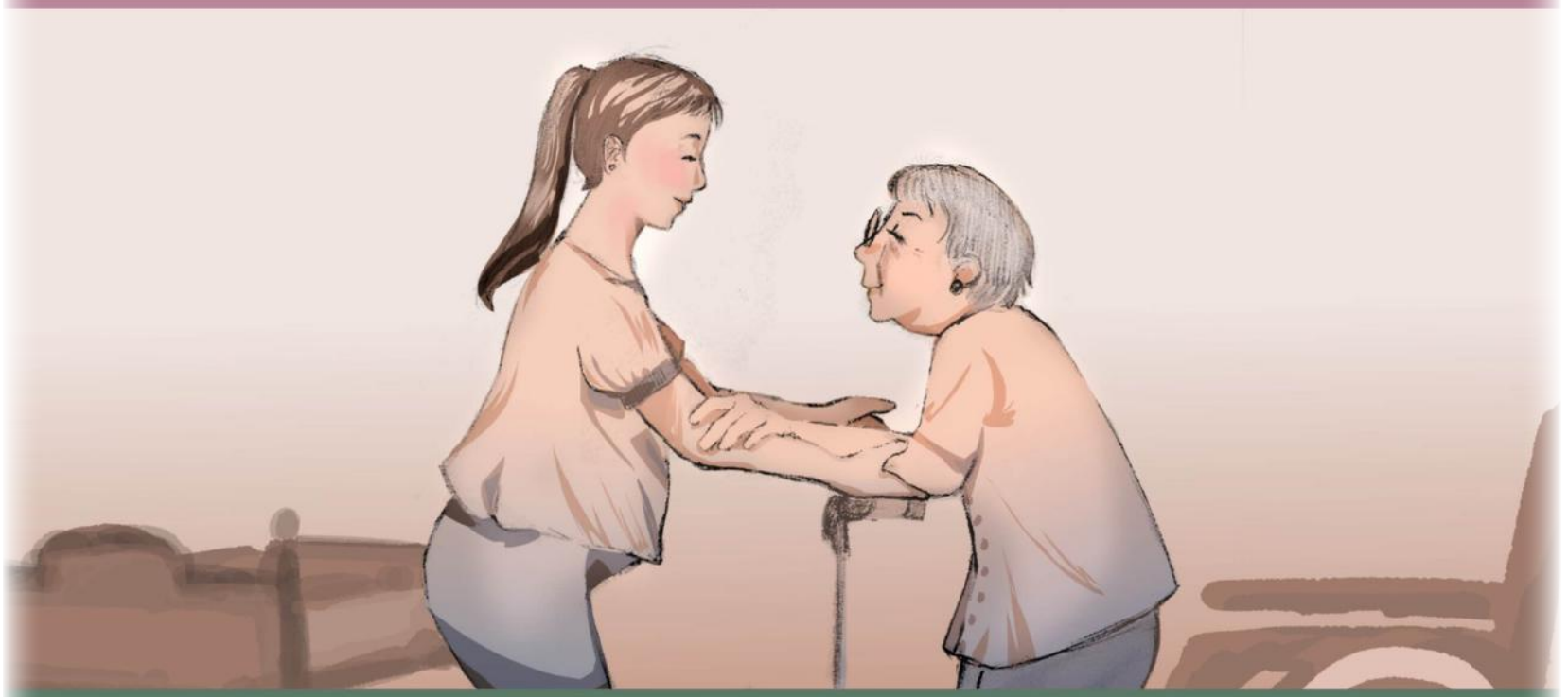
made their ways into the title when beating the pair from CITE that placed second and then, Keith Camua and Marla De Jesus, third place in the rank for CITHM. It was, in fact, a really big deal to me," Fernandez said after the match. "Isshey and I have worked so hard for this moment. All of our teamwork, it worked because we did not think we could do this together."

The singles matches interspersed with their intensity was a celebration of teamwork and sportsmanship, not just talented individuals. The dedication and tremendous sportsmanship by each athlete made the event itself into a true showcase of excellence in badminton.

Given good champions such as Soriano, Securata, and Fernandez in that order, the future looks bright for badminton at La Consolacion University. Their triumph goes hand-in-hand with peer performances to set the highest bar in future tournaments: badminton at LCUP will only continue and inspire generations of athletes and players to come.







LIFE'S GIFT

by Nicole Escobar



TRUTH COURIER
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