



Fear, the Fool
OPINION · 5

SSC Penpal Project unites GS, HS for Friendship Day BY KEN DANIEL I

To celebrate Friendship Day, Colegio San Agustin-Makati (CSA)'s High School (HS) Supreme Student Council (SSC) pioneered the "Project Penpal" last August 17, 2024, a letter-writing initiative where HS students connected with peers from Grade School (GS) and Early Childhood Education (ECE) departments.

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ILLUSTRATED BY MARY ANN ABADILLA

INSIGHTS

THE AUGUSTINIAN QUEST FOR TRUTH
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EAGLES EYEING GOLD

Augustinians win big in various tilts

BY CHIARA VALENZUELA

Colegio San Agustin Makati students continue to demonstrate exceptional prowess, securing significant victories in international, national, and interscholastic competitions in academic year 2024-2025.

Augustinian students showcased their brilliance in various international academic competitions, earning numerous gold, silver, and bronze medals across multiple disciplines.

SOARING HIGH... 3

Work Immersion Program returns in SHS

BY TATSUMI GABRIELLE SASAKI

To equip students with valuable practical experience and professional guidance, the High School Department brings back the Work Immersion Program (WIP) for qualified Grade 12 students.

According to Mr. Justin Lazo, the WIP teacher-in-charge, Colegio San Agustin-Makati (CSA)'s implementation of WIP came to a halt in 2020 to safeguard students from the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With preparations for its reinstatement completed in 2023, the Department officially reopened the WIP during the first semester of this academic year, allowing Grade 12 students to transition from classroom learning to working environments.

Currently, CSA has partnerships with several companies for the Work Immersion program, including REIS Holdings Inc., Sognare Systems & Solutions Corp., San Juan De Dios Hospital, and San Agustin Museum.

International partners for the WIP are Australian higher education institutions including Bond University, Southern Cross University, and Macquarie University. These partnerships expand the work and academic exposure of the students.

Additionally, upcoming partnerships with other companies are in progress and will be implemented in the following semesters.

Regarding the program's return, Mr. Lazo stated, "I was happy to hear from the students that they have been looking forward to doing the Work Immersion, and I think that it is also a sign of success."

Following a successful semester, the program is gradually introducing significant improvements for the upcoming Work Immersion students, including digitizing portfolios and transitioning all documentation, such as timesheets and journals, to an online format.

international news

Global fertility rate falls to 2.25, UN discloses

BY SOFIA GUILIA DIÑO



SEE STORY ON 03

ILLUSTRATED BY EMIGLIANA SALONGA



CLEAN UP! Students help clean up trash at the school surroundings, emphasizing the strengthened use of waste management in the Augustinian community.

PHOTO BY PAULINE DEL ROSARIO.

oncampus

Sustainability, not just a trend or buzzword – Dr. Basilio

BY ANGELA IN-YOUNG HWANG

Aiming to inspire greater community awareness and action, Dr. Remedios Basilio, chairperson of the school's waste management team, gave an insightful talk on environmental sustainability and the urgent challenges of climate change through the initiative of Colegio San Agustin's Sustainability Council. The event, which transpired on September 12, 2024, had three main goals: raising awareness about sustainability issues, empowering

FRIENDSHIP DAY...

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The SSC collaborated with the ECE and GS to collect the names of the students from the participating grade levels (Senior Kinder, Grade 3, and Grade 4 students) and match them with their penpals using a randomized box of names. A letter dropbox was set up in the High School lobby from August 17 to August 20, 2024.

Inspired by his parent's stories of sending telegrams before the rise of modern communication, SSC President Carlos Rico Rey recognized the significance of strengthening the internal bonds within the Augustinian community through traditional and meaningful ways.

"This Friendship Day, let us foster the value of unity. We must take this opportunity to build meaningful connections with our younger brothers and sisters," Rey shared.

According to Rey, the project was scheduled to be completed by the end of August. However, due to logistical issues such as numerous class interruptions, the letters' release date was pushed back to the end of September.

On October 1, 2024, response letters written by GS students were returned to HS students. With the project's culmination, discussions within the SSC focused on the potential establishment of this effort as an annual Friendship Day tradition within the school.

nat'news

PhilHealth to shoulder costs of eyeglasses, mobility aids

BY SABRINA HANNAH ORDINANZA

To lighten the financial load of Filipinos, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) announced that they are to implement a program covering the costs of prescription eyeglasses, crutches, walkers, and wheelchairs starting this January.

The packages under the program are available to senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and individuals prescribed by their physician to use eyeglasses and assistive devices.

Former PhilHealth President Emmanuel Ledesma requested the government's support until January 2025 to finalize the technicalities of the program and implement it nationwide.

The agency is also considering proper costing, accepted standards of care, and proper distribution of the devices included in the package.

PhilHealth is reportedly establishing partnerships with optical centers and pharmacies that can distribute benefit packages to these individuals.

Israel Francis Pargas, Senior Vice President of the agency's Health Finance Policy Sector office,

stated that in addition to meeting the requests of Congress and PhilHealth members, the packages that cover these devices are in line with the Universal Health Care Act.



oncampus

REPRESENT.

Philippine delegates let out an energetic cheer during the ceremony of the 2024 World Scholar's Cup in Bangkok in September 6-11, 2024.

PHOTO FROM WORLD SCHOLARS CUP.



Augustinians poised for World Scholar's Cup global round

BY KEN DANIEL I

After representing the Philippines at the 2024 World Scholar's Cup (WSC) in Bangkok, Thailand, selected students of Colegio San Agustin-Makati's are now bracing to compete at the 2025 WSC Global Round.

In 2024, the team, composed of Rafael Joaquin Balagot (12B), Maria Deanna Tong (8A), and Regina Giselle Balagot, alumni of Batch 2024, bagged numerous awards and qualified for the 2024 Tournament of Champions (ToC) at Yale University.

Rafael Balagot earned a gold Team Debate medal and a silver Collaborative Writing medal. Tong also secured a gold medal in Collaborative Writing. At the same time, Regina Balagot brought home two silver medals in the Scholar's Challenge and Team Debate, along with a gold medal in Collaborative Writing.

Their team awards included a silver medal in Team Debate and

two gold medals in Collaborative Writing and Scholar's Bowl, which earned them a spot at the 2024 ToC.

However, following discussions between the team and their moderator, Mr. Joaquin Y. Malalad, the delegates decided to withdraw from the ToC competition due to the constrained timeline between the ToC and the 2025 WSC Manila Round.

Earning various silver and gold medals, a new group of WSC Global Round qualifiers emerged from the team in the 2025 WSC Manila Round at Singapore School Manila on November 22-23, 2024.

Representing the Junior Division are Margaret Cabrera (7B), Violet Isabel Manuel (7B), Aditya Kumar Sinha (7G), Sofia Adams Saraza (7E), Vanessa Marie Valdez (7B), and Clarissa Priscila R. Balabat (8F), with the Senior Division including Gabrielle Dominique Reynoso (11G), as well as 2024 ToC qualifiers Maria Deanna Tong (8E) and Rafael Joaquin Balagot (12B).

With this strong display of Augustinian excellence, the team set its sights on another Global Round in WSC.

New PH map includes WPS

BY MA. SOPHIA RE-AN REYES

The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) announced on November 8, 2024 the creation of a new Philippine map that includes the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

According to Peter Tiangco, NAMRIA Administrator, the updated version of the map will go beyond the boundaries made by the Treaty of Paris, with it being more aligned with the provisions of the United Nations Convention of Law of the Sea and the Philippine Constitution.

The map was created in line with President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. signing the Philippine

Maritimes Zone Act, also known as the Republic Act No. 12064, which declares the maritime zones of the Philippines based on the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Tiangco emphasized the adherence of the new map to existing laws, adding that the agency awaits the issuance of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Philippine Maritime Zones Act before finalizing and publishing the map.

He also distinguishes the new Philippine map from China's, pointing out that "the big difference

here is that our map has legal basis supported by existing laws," adding that China's map claims large portions of Taiwan and the WPS, featuring the new 10-dash line.

The former 9-dash line of China was updated to form a new 10-dash line in the 2023 edition of its standard map by the Ministry of Natural Resources of China, where the new dash covers a part of Taiwan.

As of this writing, no update has been given regarding the release date and site of the new Philippine map.

Augustinian student leaders partake in Makati SOCA

BY LAMEES DABAD AND MA. SOPHIA RE-AN REYES

Augustinian student leaders participated in the State of the Children Address (SOCA) held last December 2, 2024, at the Makati Coliseum, Singkamas, Makati discussing the theme, "Break the Prevalence, End the Violence: Protecting Children, Creating a Safe Philippines!"

The address was led by Makati City Vice Mayor Monique Yazmin Maria Lagdamé, who notably opened the floor for students to share the issues they witnessed in the community and how they would like to see Makati progress over the years.

Additionally, the Augustinian students were joined by several other elementary and high school students from private and public schools, along with other local government unit leaders.

The Grade 11 Council Vice President Jan Rae Marcelino said that the SOCA inspired him "to create and innovate more initiatives and programs that will allow us to continue to grow and develop as the youth and as true Augustinian Servant Leaders."

Marcelino also shared reflections regarding the impact of camaraderie and teamwork.

"One person's effort may seem like it is only a drop in the ocean, but the collective desire and passion exhibited in that arena made me believe that there is a bright future waiting for us," he stated, reflecting on the impact of camaraderie and teamwork in building a safe future.

student leaders, and facilitating dialogue between students and school administrators.

Dr. Basilio, who has served CSA for over 30 years, including being a chemistry teacher and high school assistant principal, underscored how daily actions, from waste management to energy conservation, can make a tangible difference in the environment, encouraging students and staff to actively reduce waste and conserve resources.

"Sustainability is not just a trend or buzzword—it's a responsibility we all share," remarked Dr. Basilio.

She further emphasized the importance of collaboration in achieving lasting change. Particularly, she stated, "By collaborating, we can bridge the gap between policy-making and student-led efforts."

Additionally, Dr. Basilio highlighted the need for institutionalized waste management practices involving

the entire CSA community, from students to staff and maintenance personnel.

The talk ended with a call to action for CSA's students and staff to work together in their sustainability journey. Urging the attendees to consider future generations in their resource choices, she reminded them, "Every action we take today has an impact on tomorrow."



Every action we take today has an impact on tomorrow.

reminded Dr. Remedios Basilio in her talk about environmental sustainability.

SOARING HIGH...

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John Timothy Lim (9A) secured a silver medal while Mikaela Elise Fajardo (9A) and Joaquin Matvey Guevara (9A) both received bronze medals in the Golden Lotus Cup Math International in June 2024.

In August 2024, the Australian Mathematics Competition saw Augustinians Harshith Ramanathan Sivabalan (8B) and Joaquin Matvey Guevara (9A) earning credit and proficiency certificates respectively, standing out among 53,000 participants from 20 countries.

Reinforcing their talent in international math challenges, Sivabalan, along with batchmates Rupert Joachim De La Cerna (8A) and Jiacheng Liu (8B), also won silver medals at the Asia Mathematics Olympics in September 2024.

Advancing to the finals in Indonesia, freshman Julia Ysabel Arellano (7H) secured a Bronze in Mathematics and a Merit Award in Science at the Asian Science and Mathematics Olympiad for Primary and Secondary Schools (ASMOPS) held in the same month.

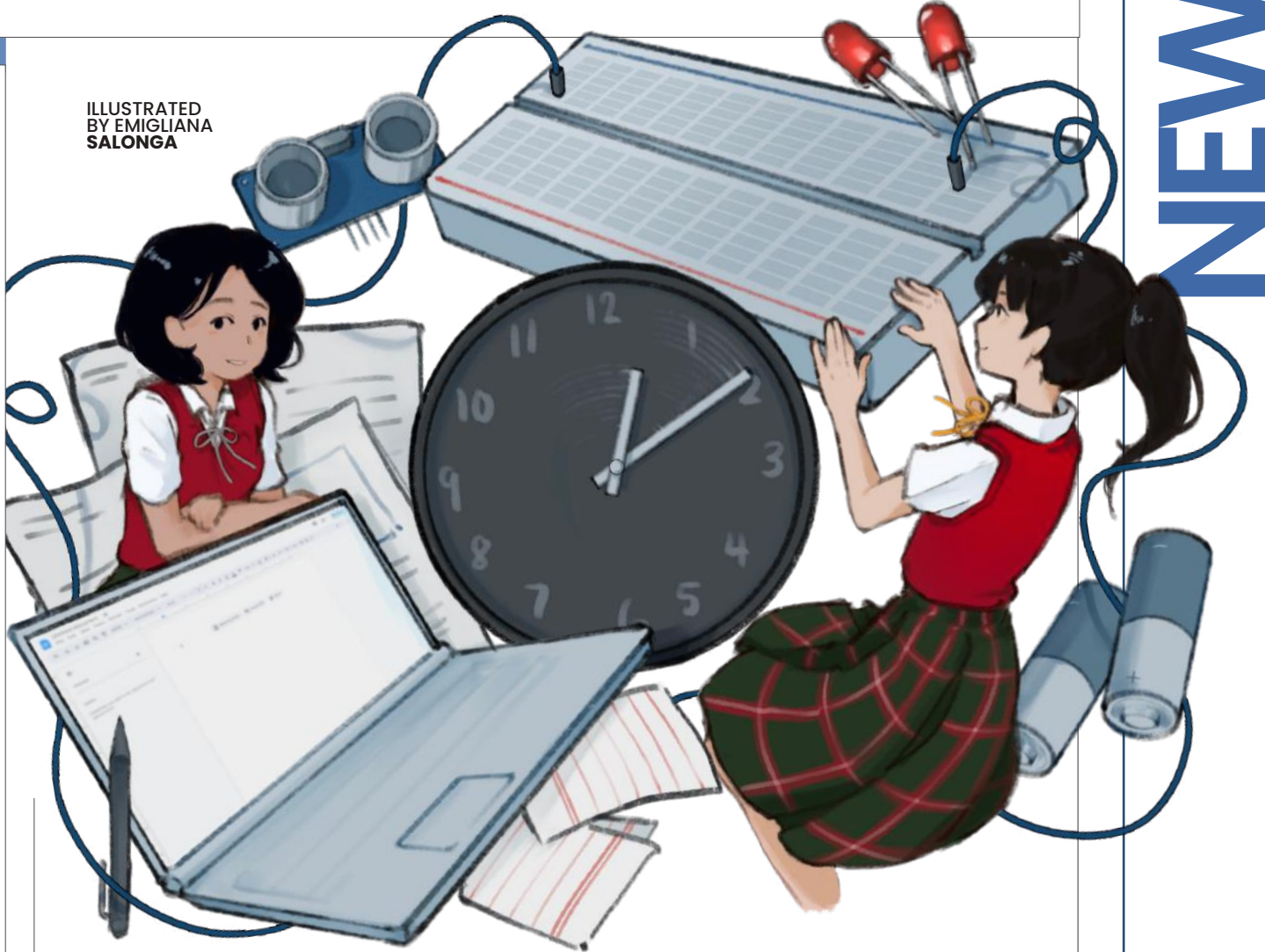
The STEMCO Global Science Olympiad held in November 2024 saw Mary Elizabeth Suaberon (10A) and Juan Miguel Rubiales (10B) winning silver in Biology and Lim a bronze medal in Chemistry.

A crowning achievement was the International Math Challenge (November 2024, Bangkok, Thailand), where Josef Marcus Rafael Araullo (7A) won gold in Category 3 (Grades 7-8), competing among students from 85 countries.

Over 700 students from the Philippines participated in the 2024 Australian Mathematics Competition, where Augustinians ranked among the country's top performers.

The British School Manila STEM Competitions saw Augustinian students bagging multiple awards in science and mathematics.

ILLUSTRATED BY EMIGLIANA SALONGA



oncampus

HS launches WIN Time, coding education

BY SABRINA HANNAH ORDINANZA

This academic year, the High School (HS) Department launched the What I Need Time (WIN) program for Senior High School (SHS) and the Augustinian Coding Education (ACE) for students in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand.

First, WIN Time is an independent study hall where SHS students get to finish homework, prepare for tests, or seek academic assistance during specific periods in a week.

With the supervision of a teacher, this program aims to lessen the stress of homework and deadlines by offering dedicated school hours, fostering improved time management, and providing a structured environment for students to manage their academic tasks more effectively.

On the other hand, ACE is a non-graded subject that consists of programming, inventing, and coding through computer

software platforms such as Raspberry Pi and Arduino Integrated Development Environment.

ACE also focuses on developing students' technological skills for real-world scenarios, preparing them for a future shaped by technological advancements and equipping them with the necessary tools for success in the digital landscape.

With specific periods each week dedicated to these programs, the WIN Time and ACE underscore CSA's commitment to enhancing student learning and providing the necessary time for students to address their academic needs.

internat'news

Global fertility rate falls to 2.25, UN discloses

BY SOFIA GUILIA DIÑO

The United Nations (UN) revealed in its World Population Prospects Report 2024 that global fertility rates have fallen to 2.25 births per woman.

According to the report, rates have reduced to nearly half of the birth rate in the 1950s, falling from five births per woman to 2.25.

In addition, average fertility rates across Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Europe are below 2.

Across Africa, this figure stands higher at four births per woman yet has decreased significantly from

its peak rate of almost seven births per woman in the 1970s.

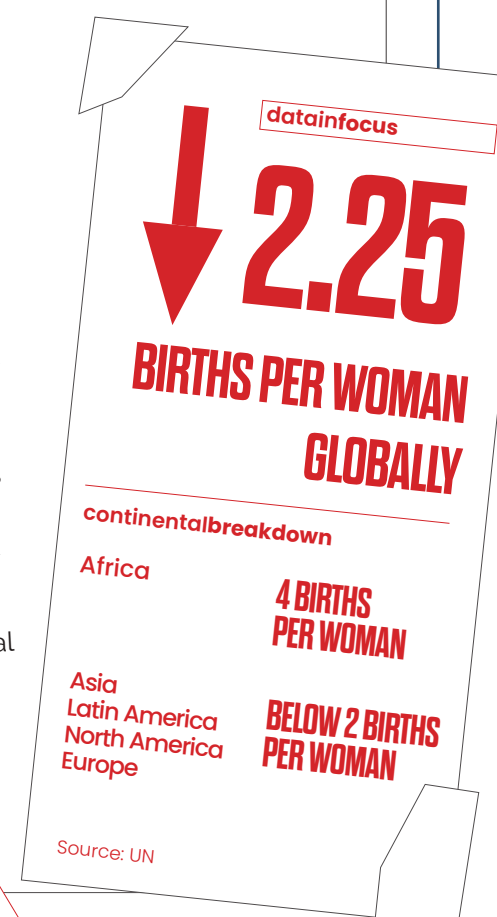
Conversely, close to one-fifth of all countries, including China, Italy, and South Korea, are experiencing ultra-low fertility rates, with less than 1.4 births per woman.

These countries, as well as those with already peaked populations, were unlikely to return to the replacement fertility level of 2.1 births per woman within the next 30 years, the report said.

The UN projects the global fertility rate to decline to 2.1 by the late 2040s.

SEE RELATED STORY AT 05

FALLING BIRTH RATES: A FINANCIAL GAMBLE



ILLUSTRATED BY EMIGLIANA SALONGA



SERBISYONG AGUSTINO. Selected Augustinian servant leaders from the Grade School and High School Department proudly represent Colegio San Agustin Makati during the State Of The Children Address in held in the Makati Coliseum last December 2, 2024.

PHOTO BY EMMANUEL VECINO.



editorial

LOCKING IN, LEVELING UP

The claw descends and picks up a prize, lifting it out of the pile—suddenly, it's no longer buried in the familiar. For a student stepping into the real world, the experience is much the same: a mix of curiosity and trepidation as they leave their comfort zone for a space of growth, opportunity, and discovery. The Department of Education's (DepEd) Work Immersion Program (WIP), established in 2017 under DepEd Order No. 30, serves as a pivotal bridge between academic learning and real-world application for Senior High School students. By providing hands-on work experience, the program aims to equip students with essential life and career skills, preparing them for informed career decisions and enhancing their employability.

The pandemic temporarily halted in-person immersion, some shifting it to virtual platforms. Years later, with the return of face-to-face classes, on-site work immersion was also reinstated. Now, discussions are underway to extend the required hours from 80 to 620. But is this truly a beneficial move?

This recent proposal to extend the required immersion hours is a commendable initiative that aligns with the program's foundational goals. This extension offers students a more comprehensive exposure to workplace environments, allowing them to delve deeper into industry practices, workplace dynamics, and professional expectations. The students gain firsthand experience through the program, bridging the gap between classroom learning and the workforce. True learning happens through doing. It's one thing to study a concept in a textbook; it's another to apply it when faced with real tasks, real challenges, and real expectations. Therefore, extending WIP hours may become the gateway that effectively transitions students from being observers to active participants in the workplace. With the current time limitations set for learners to settle into this experience, work immersion risks becoming just another school requirement instead of the valuable training ground that it could be.

Additionally, such immersive experiences are instrumental in refining technical skills specific to learners' chosen strand, be it mastering industry-relevant software, understanding

organizational protocols, or participating in professional engagements. Extended immersion means these essential skills are honed to their full potential, building confidence and competence that makes students job and college-ready. Without adequate practical exposure, students may find themselves underprepared for the demands of real employment, leading to a skills mismatch in the labor market.

Moreover, an extended immersion period facilitates a more accurate assessment of career alignment with personal interests and passions. Experiencing the realities of a chosen field firsthand enables students to make informed decisions, reducing the likelihood of committing to unsuitable career paths. This proactive approach not only benefits individual career satisfaction but also contributes to a more efficient and motivated workforce. In the end, it is difficult to force a claw to hold onto a prize it wasn't meant to pick up—just like you can't force a student into a course or career they weren't meant to pursue.

Success isn't just about grabbing hold of the prize and letting it drop through the flap—it takes skill, attention to detail, strategic moves, and sometimes, a bit of luck. With hands-on experience, students reduce the risk of entering careers that aren't the right fit. Extending WIP hours underscores the essence of the Senior High School program—to cultivate a generation of Filipinos ready to excel and innovate in their respective fields, thereby uplifting national progress and pride. Increasing work immersion hours is just one step—but a crucial one—toward making this goal a reality.

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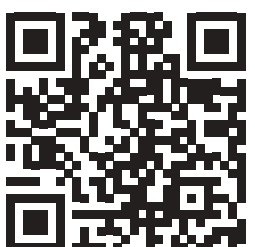
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LITTLE MISS CHATTERBOX

Fear, the Fool

BY CHIARA VALENZUELA



Just weeks into Donald Trump's second term, the newly inaugurated U.S. president has wasted no time diving headfirst into controversy. His early executive orders, many of which mirror the ultra-conservative Project 2025 blueprint, have reignited debates over immigration, civil rights, and government overreach. From rolling back diversity initiatives to reinstating bans on transgender military service members, Trump's actions underline a familiar playbook: fear-mongering as governance.

But first, what exactly is populism? According to political scientist Jan Zielonka, it is a political style that emphasizes a stark division between the "pure people" (that's us—the common folk!) and the "corrupt elite" (those seemingly out-of-touch politicians).

Populism is frequently described as a "thin ideology" because it can be combined with various other ideologies, such as nationalism, liberalism, or socialism, allowing it to manifest across the political spectrum. This framework often features a charismatic leader who claims to be the voice of the common folk. In this narrative, scapegoats—be they ethnic, religious, or political minorities—are conveniently identified as the source of all societal woes. Sound familiar?

For Duterte, drug users are the root of all societal evil, a notion he has championed with alarming zeal. His infamous anti-drug campaign has transformed neighborhoods into battlegrounds where police act as judge, jury, and executioner. The result? A society rife with paranoia, where neighbors eye each other with suspicion, convinced that anyone could be a potential criminal or informant. Duterte's rhetoric was unflinching: "I will kill you," he declared to those involved in drugs—a statement that underscored his hardline stance.

In Trump's case, immigration has often taken center stage. From his 2016 campaign rhetoric labeling some Mexican immigrants as "rapists" to policies aimed at restricting entry from certain countries and tightening border security, Trump has consistently framed immigration as a challenge to national security and cultural cohesion. His administration's family separation policy at the U.S.-Mexico border became one of the most polarizing symbols of this approach.

Both leaders thrive on this fear-driven approach to bolster their image as "men-of-the-people." By painting drug users or immigrants as existential threats, Duterte and Trump not only stoke division but also justify draconian policies that resonate with their bases while further polarizing their nations.

This ethos cultivated by both leaders creates an "us versus them" mentality that fractures communities. The message is crystal clear: if you're not with us, you're against us.

This approach erodes trust among citizens and breeds animosity between different social groups. It is as if our leaders are trapped in a perpetual game of hot potato, tossing responsibility around while the real issues simmer on the back burner. When will we stop blaming one another and pointing fingers?

It's time that instead of vilifying groups of people, we demand leaders who bring us together rather than tear us apart. In a world already grappling with division and chaos, the last thing we need is more fear-mongering from our so-called leaders.

We must elect leaders who promote inclusivity and collaboration—not stoking fears or creating enemies. Dialogue over diatribe. Community over conflict.

In the Philippines—where nearly 30% of the population is composed of youth—the younger generation holds immense potential to mold a more inclusive future. They can participate in local governance through initiatives like Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), volunteer for campaigns prioritizing unity over division, and use social media platforms to amplify advocacy efforts for equitable policies.

Grassroots dialogues can also help bridge divides within communities while pushing for reforms like improved voter registration access to empower more citizens in shaping democracy.

When people come together, they become stronger, more resilient, and far less susceptible to the whims of fear-mongering demagogues. After all, isn't it time we stopped letting fear define our politics?

TALLIES TO REALITIES

Falling Birth Rates: A Financial Gamble

BY SOFIA GUILIA DIÑO



Apparently, women should be blamed for the world's declining fertility rates. Women must give birth to babies to help their country survive. They are child bearers, after all. Or, so they say.

Recently, a dual income, no kids preference has been growing among young couples, raising questions as to whether a no kids ideal should even be embraced.

Think. Why are fertility rates falling in the first place? Is it not due to the high costs of childcare? Do parents not have to secure a stable job first to properly raise a child?

First, childcare expenses in countries like New Zealand and the Czech Republic can exceed 20 percent of average salaries. These financial pressures force parents, particularly women, to make difficult choices when starting a family. Additionally, inflexible labor markets in countries like Spain and Germany penalize career breaks for childcare, further discouraging family planning.

The International Monetary Fund also reveals a strong negative relationship between fertility rates and female labor force participation. As wages increase, so do the expenses of childcare. Thus, women must work longer to accommodate these prices—ultimately decreasing fertility rates.

Case in point: Japan and Niger. In 2023, Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was approximately \$33,834, one of the world's highest. Yet, the country hit an all-time low of 1.20 births per woman in the same year. In addition, only 48% of Japanese mothers return to full-time work after childbirth due to systemic

barriers that make balancing careers and parenting challenging.

Conversely, Niger had a GDP per capita of only \$618 and a fertility rate of 6.5. This high rate may be attributed to women's limited access to education and family planning services, coupled with a contextual socio-economic dynamic. Higher fertility rates may be explained by cultures viewing children as a form of economic security. However, as GDP per capita increases, fertility rates decline due to a trade-off between the "quality" and "quantity" of child investment.

Despite the dynamic, this trend is changing in countries with robust childcare support systems. Nordic nations like Sweden and Estonia stabilized their fertility rates to around 1.8 to 2.0, thanks to heavily subsidized childcare that makes raising children more affordable.

The Philippines' fertility rates are also stabilizing, standing at around 2.4 births since 2020. The country also provides a 105-day paid maternity leave for mothers under the 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law of 2019. This is higher than the 14-week minimum mandated by the International Labor Organization. Even the United States does not grant paid maternity leave.

However, this Act fails to recognize the reality of women carrying more than one child at a time. Section 7 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Act clearly states "The female member shall be paid only one maternity benefit, regardless of the number of offspring, per childbirth/delivery."

The law provides that extended maternity leave may also only be availed before or after the delivery of the baby without interruption. Babies need attention not just immediately after birth, but also periodical appointments with doctors. Aside from this, the Act does not give the same maternity leave benefits to parents who adopted infants or had a child through scientific interventions.

Globally and in the Philippines, economic barriers make parenting difficult. Hence, it is unreasonable and lazy to assume that women simply do not want children anymore. Stop asking why women are having fewer children. Why not ask why being a parent is such an expensive venture? Pointing the blame at women overlooks the systematic challenges that impact global fertility rates.

Women are not avoiding motherhood; they are responding to the economy that has made childcare a financial gamble. Sky-high expenses and workplaces that condemn parenthood have suppressed fertility rates more than a supposed avert of children.

If pro-natalist leaders and policymakers want more babies for their country, they should stop lecturing women about having children. Instead, they should enforce economic policies that will encourage parenthood and fix the system that makes parenting difficult.

As they say, "A woman is not a baby-making machine."

TRUE BLUE



Breathing Bad Air: The Manosphere

BY SKY ALVIAR

"Your body, my choice" is a subversive statement that has spiked in worldwide online popularity, igniting a boom in rape threats and sexist rhetoric from the "manosphere."

A play on the word "blogosphere," which refers to websites and blogs collectively, the manosphere is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as "websites and internet discussion groups that are concerned with men's interests and rights as opposed to women's, often connected with opposition to feminism or dislike of women."

In an article, authors Ben Rich and Eva Bujalka noted how young impressionable men worldwide are strongly affected by the loneliness epidemic and fall behind in educational engagement and outcomes along with personal issues such as romantic rejection, alienation, economic failure, and emasculation. According to them, these experiences allure men to the manosphere by self-help gurus, pick-up artists, and right-wing socio-political commentators who prey on insecurity and dissatisfaction to offer the "red pill" solution of adhering to their ideologies on topics including rape, service, gender roles, and toxic masculinity.

Manosphere content can be easily found on social media and on websites and blogs hosted by their communities. Additionally, a 2024 Vodafone Telecommunications campaign shows that algorithms lead most boys from unrelated and innocent content such as fitness and gaming to misogyny in about a minute based on a survey with 520 parents and 500 teenage boys by Opinium, a market research firm. The

manosphere also leads attacks on feminist movements such as MeToo and currently the 4 Nos movement by distorting their arguments.

The manosphere misrepresents men's issues as a crisis of misandry and emasculation, promoting a vague masculinity that fuels identity struggles. It enforces restrictive norms on gender expression, emotional support, maturity, and tolerance toward women and queer individuals. As a harmful construct, toxic masculinity harms all and must be dismantled.

The normalization of boys underperforming in school not only hinders their academic growth but also limits their understanding of social issues and their ability to empathize with marginalized communities. The widespread acceptance of the phrase "boys will be boys" reinforces harmful attitudes, stigmatizes mental health, and fosters a mindset that makes them more susceptible to the manosphere's rhetoric and echo chambers. According to the World Bank Group, key factors contributing to boys' underachievement include low participation, low completion rates, and poor learning outcomes.

Thus, parents and schools must become proactive in shaping behavior by equipping children with media literacy, enabling them to critically assess rhetoric, embrace differences, and seek proper psychological support. Key actions include challenging—rather

than reinforcing—the stereotype of underperforming boys, integrating media literacy into all academic levels, incorporating discussions on online social issues into the curriculum, and educating parents and educators on digital trends they may have not experienced firsthand.

Furthermore, many men feel alienated from progressive movements but find validation in the messaging of the manosphere, which reinforces their prejudices and anger toward those they perceive as having wronged or emasculated them. While progressive movements often operate in good faith, they struggle to engage these men, as meaningful dialogue is hindered by mutual hostility and name-calling. To create lasting change, movements must strike a balance—firmly rejecting bigotry while fostering pathways for growth and understanding.

Above all, it is men who must take the lead in fostering change, holding themselves and others accountable for meeting the basic standards of respect and decency. There is no justification for demeaning others as lesser. Men must develop the social and emotional maturity to recognize their position in society, understand the root causes of these issues, and work toward meaningful change. While not every man engages in harmful behavior, all men have a role in preventing it—ensuring a safer and more inclusive world for everyone.

TURNPIKE

Cheating the system

BY JARESI AH BACAR

The world does not merely revolve around the sun; it also revolves around the concept of numbers. From the numerical figures we see on a clock that creates our days to the numbers on a piece of paper that influence our futures, numbers are indeed an undeniable part of life. Even our grading system is defined by numbers; for students, it is natural to feel concerned about grades. Truthfully, there is nothing wrong with caring about these digits. Yet, when this concern reaches the point where one resort to dishonesty, proper courses of action should be taken.

Many may have grown desensitized to test leaks and covert exchanges, as this has disappointingly been ingrained in classroom culture. Subtle glances at classmates, discreet hand signals to indicate multiple-choice answers—these actions might seem easy to spot, yet they often go unnoticed. Over time, individuals have devised various methods to outwit rules. While these behaviors may be rampant, they are likely far from what the education system would expect from their students, making them all the more concerning. The root of the issue runs deeper than pure misconduct. Studies have shown that academic dishonesty thrives in high-pressure environments. A 2023 study by Michelle L. Vieyra and Kari D. Weaver showed that students most

likely engage in plagiarism because of external factors like grading practices.

School may be a place of learning, but what do we do once these conventional systems, such as numerical grading, start breeding a culture of dishonesty? Most alarming is that some of us are knowingly and openly participating in these acts, either as complicit participants or hushed bystanders.

In situations like these, remaining silent tends to feel like the safest choice because the individuals committing these acts are our peers, and speaking up without proper evidence may lead to unintended harm. The solution, then, should not be punitive but restorative. Schools must foster academic integrity by revisiting the stem of most of this—the grading policies and the

disciplinary systems that come with it. For instance, implementing honor codes that encourage ethical behavior may minimize and even eradicate cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty. Additionally, promoting a culture where students are not afraid to speak up when witnessing these cases may go a long way in rearing accountable citizens.

Ultimately, the choice to uphold integrity remains yours, but it is also a communal responsibility. Although the world undeniably revolves around numbers and the details within them, when will we live in a world where integrity carries the same weight as intelligence?



humansofcsa

ILLUSTRATED BY
ELIZABETH ANCAJA

The Inner Workings:

The Augustinian Efforts Behind the Curtains

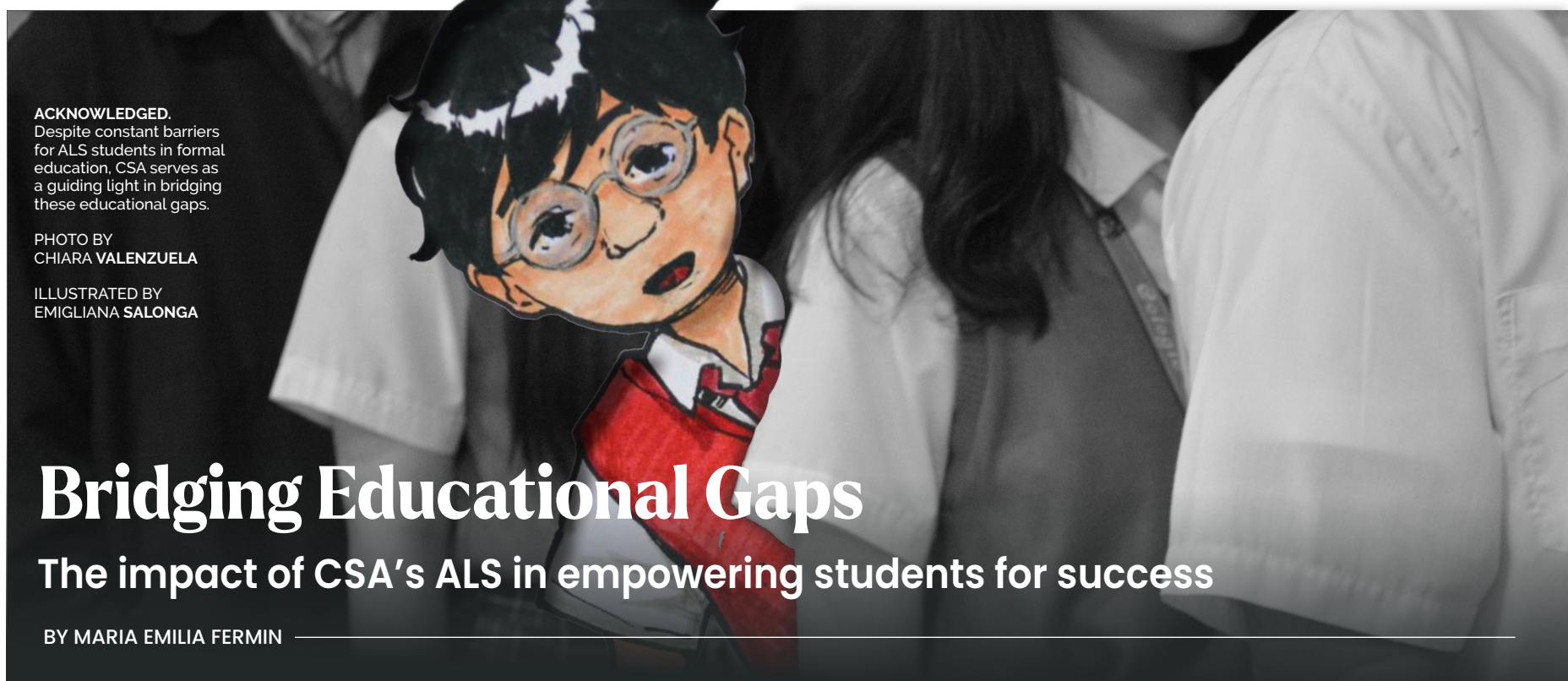
There's always more going on behind the scenes, whether it's behind a curtain or at the heart of a well-known event. What may seem simple on the surface is often the result of many efforts and moving parts. Everything we experience exists because of the people and the effort they dedicate to making it happen.

insidethisfeature

Our Outer Linkages

Bridging Educational Gaps

A Father's Promise



ACKNOWLEDGED.
Despite constant barriers for ALS students in formal education, CSA serves as a guiding light in bridging these educational gaps.

PHOTO BY
CHIARA VALENZUELA

ILLUSTRATED BY
EMIGLIANA SALONGA

Bridging Educational Gaps

The impact of CSA's ALS in empowering students for success

BY MARIA EMILIA FERMIN

"Education is something no one can take away from you." This powerful statement resonates deeply with countless individuals in the Philippines, where the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) serve as a beacon of hope for those facing barriers to mainstream education. FLOs offer flexible learning pathways that allow learners to achieve basic education competencies, all adapted to the needs of the individual.

In 2018, CSA recognized the profound impact of offering an FLO, propelling the institution to establish its own way of supporting students with special needs, and in 2019, the implementation began after the DepEd's approval. This journey was rather tedious as the people behind this initiative aimed to make this version of the ALS, one of a kind. In doing so, dedicated Augustinian priests and lay administrators designed a program not only to educate but also to support the holistic development of its learners.

CSA's ALS stands out for its comprehensive approach, going beyond conventional educational offerings. One of the distinguishing features is its extensive counseling services, which provide emotional and psychological support to students. All of the teachers in this system have a degree in psychology which greatly contributes to the safe and effective learning of the students. To meet the students' emotional and academic needs, its implementation of the curriculum is frequently changed and adjusted. Unlike traditional homeschooling, CSA's ALS requires students to attend classes two to three times a week,

promoting accountability through its flexible learning plans, regular assessments, peer support, and mentorship. Its setup is designed to foster a sense of community among the students through community engagement to enhance their commitment and see the impacts of their efforts.



CSA's ALS is not just creating pathways for success; it is a powerful testament to the idea that education is a non-negotiable asset

The ALS program at CSA is dedicated to treating all students with fairness and respect, regardless of their abilities. Its goal is to help students recognize their potential and contribute meaningfully to society. A unique aspect of the program is its focus on acknowledging the achievements of all learners, boosting self-esteem, and motivating

personal growth. In recognition events, unlike in the standard program, each ALS student receives an award tailored to their unique strengths, character, and contributions. The recognition is based on how they stand out in their own way, acknowledging the individual effort and personal growth they've demonstrated. It also provides tailored support to help students overcome academic challenges, fostering resilience and empowering them to reach their personal best. Through recognition and individualized support, CSA bridges educational gaps and nurtures confident individuals ready to make a difference.

The impact of ALS in the Philippines, through initiatives like CSA's Augustinian Learners Support, is nothing short of transformative. In a world where we fight the barriers to education, programs like these are important for forging a more equitable future for students. CSA's ALS is not just creating pathways for success; it is a powerful testament to the idea that education is a non-negotiable asset—it empowers individuals and ignites hope.



The countdown to graduation

Overcoming senioritis BY JARESI AH MIKHAELA BACAR

As the final year of high school approaches, many students find themselves with songs on repeat, countless hangouts with friends, looming deadlines for pending requirements, and, for some, the inevitable feeling of senioritis. Senioritis is the loss of motivation that often occurs when graduating students are preoccupied with thoughts of simply getting the final year of school over with.

ILLUSTRATED BY
LEGASPI CALDERON

Perhaps this stems from the fact that seniors gave everything they have in eleventh grade—juggling deadlines, striving for the highest grades to secure college applications—so by the time they reach their final year, they need one last push. Yet, that is easier said than done. Many seniors tend to adopt the mindset of "It doesn't matter anymore," knowing that college applications primarily focus on their grades before twelfth grade. While some

The inner workings of CSA-Makati's outreach activities

BY IRAH JANE PARAISO



COLORS OF CHANGE. Grade 9 Augustinians sparking creativity at Bangkal Elementary School (Main). PHOTO FROM BATCH 2028

A bustling classroom where young students are not just burying their heads in textbooks, but also interacting with other learners from diverse backgrounds—this is what a day in Colegio San Agustin-Makati (CSA) looks like. At the heart of CSA lies a vital network of outreach linkages that bridges the gap between its inner community and the outside world.

Three fundamental principles serve as CSA's institutional compass. One of which is Caritas, a reminder that what we give is not nearly as important as why we give. Second is Veritas, highlighting the importance of truth. Moreover, Augustinians exemplify the significance of Unitas—the value that unites us in supporting and engaging with diverse communities.

Putting these values to actual practice, each grade level in the High School Department partners with a community to develop a sense of social responsibility. For instance, Grade 7 focuses on caring for the elderly, forming connections with institutions such as Hospicio De San Jose and San Lorenzo Home for the Elderly. Here, Augustinians provide companionship and support, reminding us of the importance of honoring our elders. Meanwhile, Grade 8 connects with the younger generation by engaging with public schools in Makati where they foster fun and educational experiences. The outreach activities of Grade 9 students help to empower learners through teaching basic skills such as math and reading, reinforcing the importance of education as a tool for change.

The outreach initiatives are not limited to specific grade-level activities. During subject months at CSA, students share their blessings with assigned beneficiaries. For example, during Social Studies Month last October, the Makati City Jail-Male Dormitory was the beneficiary, and each grade level was tasked with donating specific items: Grade 7 provided bath soap, Grade 8 contributed detergent powder, while Grades 9 and 10 donated alcohol.

With these activities as lived evidence, the mission of the Community Extension Services is all about building relationships in communities through teaching. As Dr. Raquel Reyes, Community Extension Services Teacher-in-Charge, emphasizes, "Our goal for these beneficiaries is to improve lives. Not just for them, but for us. To make the lives of these people better, we've got to deliver the best."

PHOTO FROM BATCH 2029



PHOTO FROM BATCH 2026

BY JEANNE KRISTEN FETALVERO

A Father's Promise A Christmas present from Teatro Punlahi

On December 12, 2024, Teatro Punlahi's play, "A Father's Promise," hit the stage as the senior high school organization's first theater production of the school year. The play, much like a musical, exhibited the many talents of its members through their impeccable acting, singing, and storytelling. With its plot centered around the challenges a family has to go through during the Christmas season, along with the need for hope and each other, the play dazzled the audience and set the mood for an auspicious Christmas.

Behind the curtains that graced the St. Ambrose Theater, Venus Valencia (Director) shared her experiences in preparing this Christmas-themed play. She noted how the preliminaries done to create "A Father's Promise" had some ups and downs, with some issues including conflicting rehearsal schedules. The schedule was more packed compared to the previous year, and they were only able to use the theater—the actual venue of the production—for practice for only three days. Besides that, there have also been some struggles when it came to brainstorming what the organization wanted to present to the school during Christmas.

Valencia remarked, "We wanted something simple but also impactful in a way to introduce Teatro 2025 before jubilation."

On a lighter note, plenty of enjoyable moments behind the scenes made watching the finished product all the more satisfying to the members. The Teatro organization could lean on each other for support and guidance, and the prior Teatro Punlahi presidents could visit and assist in the current production. The Tech Dress Rehearsals (TDR) were also very fulfilling for the members. In every TDR, the cultivation of the actors' performances was clear to see and the play was slowly able to come to fruition.

Truly, "A Father's Promise" encapsulates all of the

creativity, passion, and effort of Teatro Punlahi, and despite some of the hurdles encountered, it became a play that could definitely introduce this year's Teatro organization to the school. Given the live reaction of the audience, it is safe to say that the play was a success and CSA can look forward to SHS Teatro Punlahi's next productions in the years to come.

PHOTOS BY DESIREE TINGSON



continue to push themselves, they often feel an overwhelming sense of fatigue and laziness they've never experienced before.

Overcoming these challenges may be difficult, but it is certainly possible. While senior year is often filled with fun and memorable experiences, it is necessary to stay connected to your motivations in school to keep pushing forward. Whether it's the grand recognition of walking up on stage to receive an award or simply the desire to make our parents proud, these small motivations can serve as

powerful reminders to persevere.

Seniors, although you're eager to don that red toga and embark on your next journey, take a moment to reflect on the times you've truly given your all. This way, in the future, you won't find yourself regretting missed opportunities with thoughts like, "I wish I had done more." As your graduation approaches, hopefully, you stand tall with pride, knowing that you have conquered that pesky senioritis.

As your graduation approaches, hopefully, you stand tall with pride, knowing that you have conquered that pesky senioritis.

ILLUSTRATED BY EMIGLIANA SALONGA



celebration so far. "During the STEM Olympics, I was able to casually interact and talk with fellow mates more," says Marcus Escurel, a STEM student from 11C, showing that these strand weeks give their students opportunities to grow closer as a strand and not just individual classes. He shares that being in the same strand allows him and his strand mates to be more understanding of each other since they know what the other is going through, which has been a common answer among the interviewees.

In terms of providing its students with the opportunity to explore numerous fields, there is no better place to go than General Academic Strand (GAS). Risa Fuji from 11J is one of the 7 students enrolled in the GAS strand in Grade 11, and she has a very different experience compared to the rest. She shares, "It's normal to create friends sometimes but I think that personal views may alter the characteristics of other students in GAS, making it a bit difficult to get along with." She expresses her passion and genuine interest in the topics being taught in GAS, but she also cannot ignore the fact that it has been difficult for her to become close with the people within her strand.

She emphasized the importance of reaching out to her friends whenever she needed their support.

The interviewees shared that they exert effort to stay close to their friends outside of their chosen strands because these people hold special places in their hearts. They all agreed that it doesn't bother them that their friends may have different career inclinations because their friendship is so much more to them than that. This reinforces the fact that strands were not created to limit who students are to talk to, but instead strengthen existing friendships while giving them a whole new range of people to interact with.

At the end of the day, these students are part of a batch, not just a subunit of it. A few years from now when they look back at their years in high school, they'll remember the all-nighters they pulled, the overload of information during class, the school events they got to attend, and most importantly, the people they spent it with.

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANCESCA LABO



"I know an Augustinian when I see one"

Conversations with Augustinian Alumni

BY YOHANA DAUSIN

As your parents reminisce about their high school days, you've likely heard countless tales regarding their first crushes, their best friends or their favorite teachers. Or perhaps, you've encountered the irony of school facilities suddenly improving right after they graduated. These are only a few occurrences that lead to the notion that "change is inevitable."

Change is truly inevitable, as seen through the experiences of Mrs. Josefina Harder over the past thirty-one years after she graduated from Colegio San Agustin-Makati (CSA). In an interview, Mrs. Harder, then-Marj of Batch 1993, shared that she noticed how CSA has enhanced its campus to further refine the experience. Particularly, she observed great developments in facilities like the canteen, the theater, and the gymnasium. Despite these changes since she walked the halls of CSA as a student, the friendships she built within the campus have been her long-lasting companions. That was and is the reality Mrs. Harder still continues to experience because of the collaborative opportunities given to her in CSA. To this, she adds, "As an alumna, I know an Augustinian when I see one. There is a certain unmistakable striking personality."

Where Mrs. Harder talked about friendships, another alumna reflected on how her Augustinian experience transformed her into a resilient individual. Ysabela Dausin, an Augustinian student leader having served as Batch SSC Representative from 2016-2017, Batch Business Manager from 2019-2020, and Batch PRO from 2020-2021, expresses how the lessons contributed to her being extroverted. Most of her responsibilities as a part of the student council fostered her management and social skills. Ysabela stated that she felt that it allowed her to interact with anyone and everyone. Moreover, Ysabela eagerly anticipates the cheering competition, an iconic celebration of batch unity that captures the hearts of many alumni. As a pandemic graduate, she also mentioned

she was unable to witness the renovations CSA did during that period, namely the new two-story library and the remodeled restrooms. Similarly, the changes on campus reflect the transformation alumni face as they navigate resiliently through the world. Carrying their Augustinian identity in their hearts, they persevere through the endeavors of life. Although her graduation years aren't so far back, numerous changes still occurred which begs the question: What else lies a couple of years ahead?

In 2024, another alumnus, Zach Roldan, followed in his predecessors' footsteps and proudly graduated. As he explores the mysteries of being a young adult, he recalls his relationship with his classmates and teachers. Many teachers served as his mentors and friends, and they imprinted their mark on his character. One key memory during his time in CSA was the Grade 12 retreat, an overnight activity created for self-reflection. He emphasized how it was one of the most heartfelt and meaningful activities to experience with classmates. No matter how extroverted, introverted, shy, loud, intimidating, or approachable a person is, the activity is a way to connect. In this conversation, he shared some advice, especially upcoming senior high students: Choose the right strand because this is the key to an abundant and fulfilling senior high experience; appreciate your teachers who work day and night and passionately produce quality learning experiences, your friends whom you stress about workload with, and your classmates who you laugh and spend a whole school year with. The connections and friendships made in CSA

are long-lasting life buddies whose influence will carry you throughout your journey, so appreciate them. When you walk through life's challenges, you'll carry yourself with the confidence you first built with your friends in the corridors of CSA.

As CSA-Makati celebrates its 55th year, it is a wonderful opportunity to reflect and share the fruitful experiences made in this school. The memories of these Alumni offers us a look into CSA's evolution over time. These alumni are proof that although growing up may come with fear, future graduates will look back on their journeys with a smile. From persevering through challenges in an online setting to discovering new developments in the campus, these perspectives highlight the enduring and ambitious school spirit and its part in shaping generations of Augustinians.



ILLUSTRATED BY
LEGASPI CALDERON

ILLUSTRATED BY
EMIGLIANA SALONGA

IN MEMORIAM

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
FATHER HORACIO RODRIGUEZ, O.S.A.
AUGUST 12, 1931 - DECEMBER 27, 2024

6



Kaibigan

BY RACHELLE REY

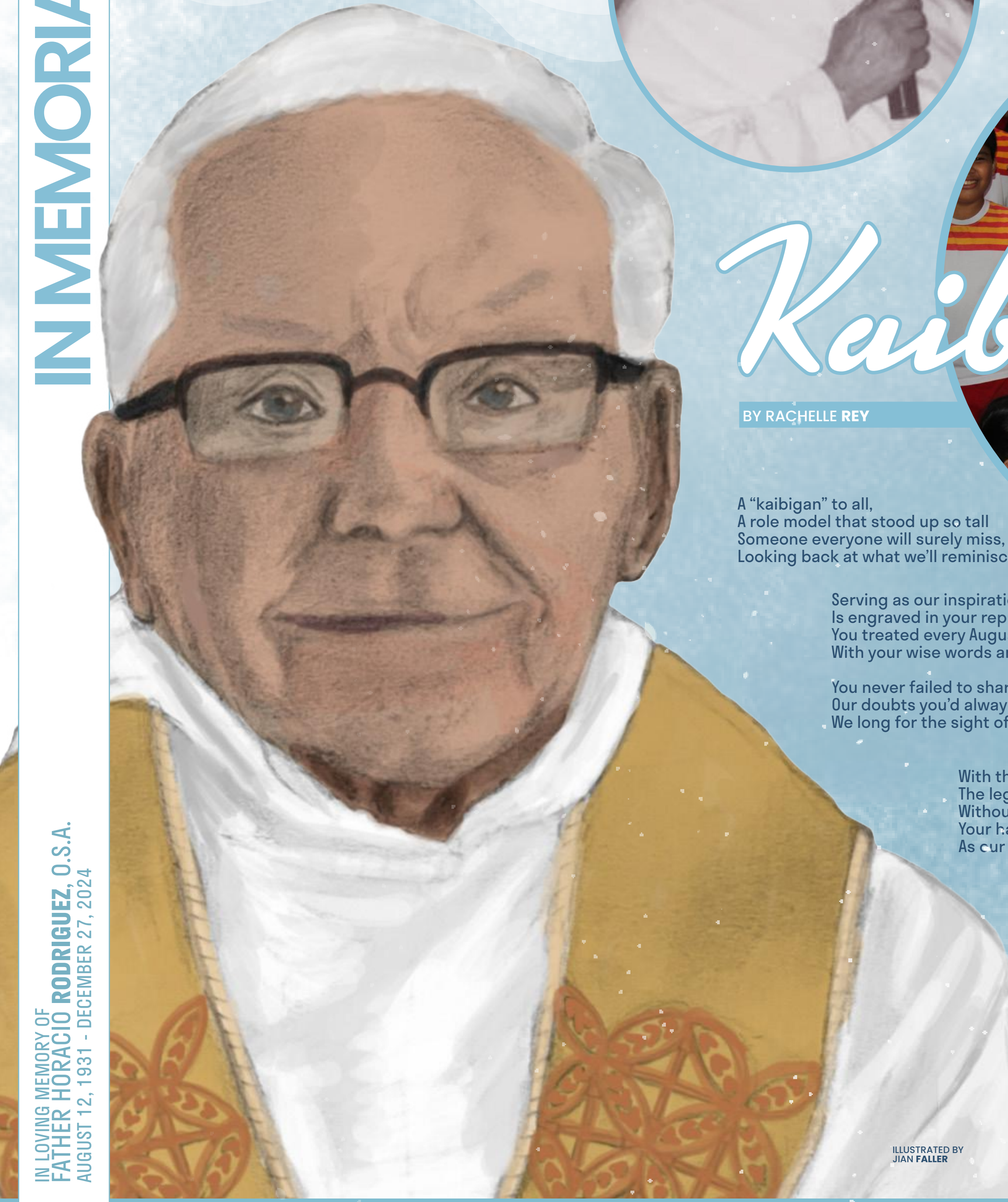
A "kaibigan" to all,
A role model that stood up so tall
Someone everyone will surely miss,
Looking back at what we'll reminisce

Serving as our inspiration
Is engraved in your reputation
You treated every August
With your wise words and

You never failed to share
Our doubts you'd always care
We long for the sight of

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ILLUSTRATED BY
JIAN FALLER





His life is a testament of how it is to be a man for others, and a man for all.



kaibigan

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nd the stories you tell

re your joy,
s destroy
f you in the hallway,

ne candies that always made our day
gacy that you bequeath,
t you, it's incomplete
ard work we will forever cherish,
memories of you will never perish

Here, you have finished your mission,
But in God's kingdom, you're an excellent addition
The candies that we once looked forward to,
With you, we now bid adieu

**It may be your time to rest,
But forever are you in our hearts, Father Rodriguez
Your next journey has only begun,
You will be missed, our kaibigan.**

A life well-lived deserves to be beautifully remembered.

Fr. Horacio was one of the school's pioneers when it opened its doors in 1969. He served as Rector from 1980 - 1984 and 1994-2018. He likewise served as the Grade School Principal from 1969 - 2018.

Fr. Rodriguez is the embodiment of the Augustinian core values of Truth, Unity and Charity, as he constantly championed the Truth, advocated for unity and friendship, and promoted charity and brotherly love for all. His life is a testament of how it is to be a man for others, and a man for all. A true Kaibigan, he will be missed and never forgotten.



IN MEMORIAM

F COLEGIO SAN AGUSTIN-MAKATI
FEBRUARY 2025



FLORA AND FAUNA.
Students dress up as different endangered species in culmination of Flora and Fauna Dress-up day last September 30, 2024.

PHOTO BY PAULINE DEL ROSARIO

HS science month 2024 mirrors DOST biodiversity Initiatives

BY JOAQUIM CALEB LARDIZABAL

Anchored on the Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) 2024 Goal #4, the High School (HS) Department's Science Month centered on the theme "Species Survival: More than just Sustainability."

DOST's 2024 Goal #4 talks about the importance of biodiversity and species protection, with the Philippines being home to 130 fauna and 85 flora species that have been newly discovered since 1987. However, the country is also home to many "hot spots" or areas with species that have experienced habitat loss.

This theme integrated the larger importance of increasing students' awareness and training them to continuously seek ways to make a positive change in the environment. This year's Science Month sought to motivate young minds to be more

DOST GOAL #4

speaks on the importance of biodiversity and species protection

proactive in environmental protection from bulletin board contests to science quiz bees and environmental dress-up activities.

Held last September, level-based science competitions, such as Grade 10's Physics Olympics and Grade 9's Chem-mazing Race, created a sense of competitiveness and teamwork between sections. "The energy hyped me up throughout! The Chem-mazing race proved how science can bring things, or in this case, people, together," said Felicia Cuenca of 9B when asked about her experience.

Through the bulletin board contest, junior high school classes were compelled to promote species survival and environmental initiatives alongside creativity, teamwork, and discipline. "Spearheading the team, I saw firsthand how each person's dedication and input led to our success," said 9A Class President Kaela Fajardo when asked about her experience.

Scientists observe single-electron covalent bonds in carbon atoms for the first time

BY ATHENA ANIKA MARAPAO

Scientists from Hokkaido University have made a groundbreaking discovery by observing rare single-electron covalent bonds between two carbon atoms, making the bond weaker and less stable than a usual covalent bond.

To observe this, the team designed a unique molecule with a shell of fused carbon rings surrounding a stretched carbon-carbon bond at its center, stabilizing the single-electron bond. By

elongating the bond of the two central carbon atoms, it becomes more likely to lose an electron during oxidation, the process of losing electrons. From this, they successfully isolated the single-electron covalent bond, also known as a sigma bond, using crystallization.

For decades, scientists believed that covalent bonds form only when atoms share one or more pairs of electrons. Until this discovery, examples of single-electron bonds between carbon atoms

have remained elusive due to their instability. Scientists have theorized their existence, but no evidence has been able to confirm it.

Professor Yusuke Ishigaki, one of the study's co-authors, stated that uncovering the nature of this is a step closer to further understanding chemical bonding theories and reactions. This research can pave the way for future innovations in the fields of organic chemistry and material science.

sciencefeature

BY SEAN OMAR FRANCISCO

Laboring in Love: Augustinian volunteers unite for coastal cleanup

One Saturday morning, the shores of Manila Bay bustled as students and teachers of Colegio San Agustín (CSA) - Makati's High School Department gathered for International Coastal Cleanup Day (ICC) at SM by the Bay Central Park, united by their shared love for the planet.

"By extending our compassion and service to the community and environment, we can truly show our love for God and his creations," replied Janie Papa, a grade 11 volunteer, when asked what drove her to join the ICC.

Ms. Amelia Hongo, Junior High School Science Coordinator and volunteer, shares the sentiment, as she said, "It's my way of giving back to all the resources that I use and all the blessings I receive from Mother Earth, when asked the same question.

The volunteers emphasized that their participation was not from obligation; rather, it stemmed from their desire to help their community, a true embodiment of the Augustinian core value, Caritas.

"Caritas," or "selfless love," as others call it, is quintessentially Augustinian. It is the foundation of true servant leadership

and community engagement and enables Augustinians to advocate for a better community in the face of adversity.

A team of 17 Augustinians, composed of teachers and students, were all united by this core value as they participated in the activity. Working side-by-side, they collected and properly disposed of as much trash from the coasts as possible.

These efforts are a part of the global ICC movement, an international initiative founded by the Ocean Conservancy in 1986 to reduce the amount of trash in the world's waterways. Since its founding, the initiative has amassed over 18 million volunteers who have collected over 380 million pounds of waste.

CSA's participation in ICC is aligned with its long-standing initiative, "CSA Goes Green," which promotes sustainable practices both on and off campus.



PREVENTION OR INFECTION? A healthcare provider preparing the MPOX Vaccine for injection in Los Angeles last July 2022.

PHOTO FROM CHIU/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Worsening mpox outbreak sparks global health concerns

BY JULIA ABIGAIL PINO

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the mpox virus strain, clade 1b, a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on August 14, 2024, following a recent outbreak across Africa, and for 2025, WHO will focus on continued surveillance, community engagement, and further research, requesting \$81.2 million in funding to support key activities.

The new strain originated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and spread to neighboring countries, resulting in over 100 confirmed cases in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. By September 2024, three cases of clade 1b outside Africa were detected in Sweden, Thailand, and India.

Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, is a viral infection primarily spread through physical contact. Clade 1, along with its sub-strain clade 1b, is more severe than clade 2, which has been linked to over 100,000 cases across 122 countries since 2022.

The WHO emphasized that mpox is unlikely to reach COVID-19 levels, with low transmission rates outside Africa. Dr. Rosamund Lewis, the WHO's mpox lead, attributed its rapid transmission to close physical

contact in affected areas rather than increased contagiousness.

As of October 2024, 24 cases involving clade 2 have been reported in the Philippines. According to WHO representative Dr. Rui Paulo de Jesus, the government is working to detect and contain the outbreak.

The declaration of the PHEIC aimed to boost disease surveillance, prevention, and preparedness across the globe. The WHO coordinated with several vaccine manufacturers to conduct needs assessments and anticipated an initial 15 million USD for funding.

The UN recommended several preventative measures for protection against mpox, including vaccination, avoiding close contact with infected individuals or animals, and maintaining proper hygiene.

DATA IN FOCUS

52

cases of mpox have been reported in the Philippines in 2024.

Source: WHO

insidethestrand

Innovus' Interstellar Voyage offers interactive STEM experience

BY ANDREA ROSE LEONCIO

In line with their strand identity as Augustinian innovators, Innovus, the official STEM organization, hosted a series of competitive yet educational events for the 2024 STEM Week from September 26 to October 3.

Formally titled "Interstellar Voyage," STEM Week kicked off with the Twist Bee on Thursday, September 26, at the Theater. Grade 11 and 12 students competed as section families in a science knowledge showdown, with randomly selected participants answering technical and computational questions. Family A secured victory with the highest points, while Families B and E were named "speedrunners"

and "most collaborative," respectively.

The multi-day program concluded with the STEM Olympics, testing both strength and intellect through three activities: a tongue twister, tug of war, and a basketball shootout, all designed to immerse students in interactive learning.

The tongue twister, titled "Tongue Twister or Tongue Twisted?" and the tug-of-

war, "Rope Snappers," required quick thinking skills and collaboration. The basketball shootout, "Brains n' Brawns," challenged players to answer strand-related questions, with each correct answer earning them a chance to shoot the ball. Family B triumphed in the tongue twister, 12C dominated the tug-of-war, and Family D came out on top for the basketball shootout.

Sean Beltran from 12C shared his basketball shootout experience, stating, "It really challenged our knowledge when it comes to STEM subjects. Having to shoot the basketball was fun even though we missed it all." Adnan Laserna, a tug-of-war participant from 11C, added, "It was an enjoyable set of activities to participate in and watch before preparing for the midterms."

Innovus also organized other events, such as the "Launchpad" rocket-building contest, the "ICONIC SHIPS"

RISING STRONG. Amid the heavy rains brought about by habagat, residents wade through floodwaters, showcasing perseverance in the face of adversity.

PHOTOS FROM BAROKANDTAKYA

GRAPHIC BY AXEL LUCIO

sciencefeature

The enduring Filipino spirit amid Habagat challenges

BY JULIA ABIGAIL PINO

For most of the second half of 2024, heavy rains poured across the Philippines, flooding homes and submerging communities with murky and knee-to-waist-deep waters. This experience is nothing new to many Filipinos who have, time and time again, suffered challenges brought on by extreme weather. The intensified Habagat, or Southwest monsoon, from June to October 2024 has once again revealed the enduring spirit of Filipinos.

Floods that lasted many days overwhelmed several communities, forcing many to brave the floodwaters for the sake of their livelihoods and their families. No one was spared from the effects of Habagat, which was even enhanced by tropical storms.

GMA's Unang Hirit Weather reporter Anjo Pertierra had to evacuate because of the severe flooding in Marikina on July 24. Despite his ordeal, he still reported to work. "Wala 'kong nasalbang gamit, ang nakuha ko lang, apat na t-shirt, gawa nga po ng sobrang bilis po ng pagtaas ng tubig sa aking bahay. [I couldn't save anything, the only things I got were four t-shirts

because the water in my house was rising too fast.]" Anjo shared. His story is only one of the many who were left stranded by the floods in Marikina, and he is just one of residents who had also gone to their rooftops to wait for rescue.

The increasing severity of weather patterns poses growing risks for the Philippines, but Filipinos have consistently proven that they can readily adapt and find hope and strength amid adversity. During the devastation of Super Typhoon Yolanda, the strongest typhoon to have hit the Philippines, photos and videos captured smiles on the faces of Filipinos, who, despite being surrounded by

destroyed houses, maintained a positive attitude and sought to look at the bright side of things—their mere survival.

As a response to weather-based calamities, many donation drives were launched, such as the ABS-CBN Foundation, Caritas Manila, and Angat Buhay, to help victims. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) also released over a million family food packs to those affected by Habagat.

While resilience has become a defining characteristic of Filipinos, these lived anecdotes highlight the increasing need for better disaster risk reduction and management plans in the country. Action

must be taken by governments, organizations, and citizens alike, especially considering that the Philippines is highly susceptible to extreme weather.

The positive mindset of Filipinos serves as an inspiration to maintain hope and bounce back from difficult times, but also as a call to work towards preventing the devastating effects of extreme weather in the future, such as by improving disaster risk management and ensuring clean roads to prevent trash from blocking drainage.



poster-making competition, the blood donation drive, and the career dress-up day, fostering curiosity and creativity in STEM while empowering students to explore their interests with confidence.

PULL! STEM students from various sections face off in an intense game of tug-of-war during the STEM Olympics.

PHOTO BY DESIREE TINGSON



UNEARTHING THE PAST

New dinosaur species found in Zimbabwe BY SAMANTHA MAGALLANES

The fossils of a new dinosaur species, *Musankwa sanyatiensis*, was discovered in Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba by a group of scientists in 2018.

This remarkable discovery marks the fourth dinosaur species found in Zimbabwe and the first found in the Mid-Zambezi Basin in more than 50 years.

As most fossils have been found in northern parts of the world, this finding prospects the African continent for the likeliness of more fossils to be detected there. Furthermore, this shines a new light on African paleontological diversity, which urges researchers to expand their sample size to African regions.

The team that uncovered this consisted of researchers from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in South Africa, the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe, Stony Brook University in New York, and the National History Museum in London.

According to Professor Paul Barrett, a paleontologist at the National History Museum in London and the lead researcher of the study, "leg bones" were discerned on the shoreline of Lake Kariba in an enterprise in northern Zimbabwe. The team found one hind leg – consisting of thigh, shin, and ankle bones – firmly ingrained into a rock.

After examination, the new species was attributed to the Sauropodomorpha clade or group, classified by its bipedalism and long neck. This clade was rife in the Late Triassic period, around 210 million years ago.

The herbivorous *Musankwa sanyatiensis* weighed approximately 390 kilograms and rose to 1.5 meters at the hip, making it among the most enormous dinosaurs of its time.

Based on the scientists' evolutionary trees, the newly-discovered species may be related to Riojasaurus from Argentina and Eucnemesaurus from South Africa. This alludes to the possibility of the species' abilities to traverse the now-South America and Southern Africa, implying their vast populations.



ILLUSTRATED BY LEGASPI CALDERON

BREAKING NEW GROUND. A researcher from Hokkaido University uses an X-ray diffractor to study the chemical bonding of a newly observed single-electron covalent bond.

PHOTO FROM HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY



BY LILY FRANCESCA TACARDON

LET'S BE REAL!**Debunking Science Myths with Facts**

These days, countless myths have become indistinguishable from facts. However, with proper research, one can easily stand strong against the dangers of misinformation.

BLUE LIGHT FROM DEVICES CAN PERMANENTLY DAMAGE YOUR EYES

Blue light is light with the shortest wavelength and highest energy, with the sun being its biggest producer and screens infamously known as one of its artificial sources. While exposure to the sun's light has already been proven to be dangerous, little to no scientific evidence exists that subjecting one's eyes to blue light from devices causes permanent damage. The most it can do—according to Dr. Rahul Khurana, a representative of the American Academy of Ophthalmology—is cause temporary digital eye strain, which comes as a result of blinking less when looking at screens, and disturb your body's circadian rhythm, the process responsible for regulating the body's sleep cycle. These effects still harm one's physiology, so it is important to practice preventative measures when using devices to lessen their occurrence. Some measures include taking regular breaks with the 20-20-20 rule (looking at an object at least 20 feet away, for around 20 seconds, every 20 minutes), investing in blue-light-blocking glasses, and minimizing screen time two to three hours before bed.

Vimont, C. (2021, March 10). Should you be worried about blue light? American Academy of Ophthalmology. <https://www.aaao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/should-you-be-worried-about-blue-light>
Helmer, J. (2024, December 30). Seeing Blue: How blue light can affect your health. WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/blue-light-health>

WEIGHTLIFTING STUNTS YOUR GROWTH

It has long since been a warning for kids and teenagers that lifting weights can stunt their growth. This comes as a concern over possible damage to these adolescents' growth plates, which have yet to have reached physical maturity and are thus more susceptible to damage. However, strength training poses similar risks to any adult who engages in the exercise. Harm can come to anyone because of factors such as improper form, too heavy weights, and a lack of supervision. When properly taught, practiced, and monitored, exercises like weight lifting are both safe and beneficial toward those who choose to perform them, including adolescents.

Lindberg, S. (2018, June 19). Does lifting weights stunt growth? Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/does-lifting-weights-stunt-growth#What-does-the-science-say>

DROPPED FOOD IS SAFE TO EAT IF RETRIEVED WITHIN 5 SECONDS

The infamous 5-second-rule states that it is okay to eat food that has been dropped on the floor if it was picked up in less than 5 seconds. It argues that the bacteria on the floor wouldn't have had the time to transfer onto the food within that short period of time. However, bacteria are "sticky" microorganisms. They are known to spread quickly upon immediate contact (less than 1 second) to an object, hence the various diseases that can be passed on in almost an instant—so it is best to stay away from eating food that has been dropped on the floor, no matter how short of a time it has stayed there.

Baird, C. S. (2012, December 14). How long can you wait after dropping food on the ground to eat it without having germs attached? Some say it's a five-second rule, others say ten. Science Questions With Surprising Answers. <https://www.wtamu.edu/~cbaird/sq/2012/12/14/how-long-can-you-wait-after-dropping-food-on-the-ground-to-eat-it-without-having-germs-attached-some-say-its-a-five-second-rule-others-say-ten/>
Miranda, R. C., & Schaffner, D. W. (2016). Longer Contact Times Increase Cross-Contamination of Enterobacter aerogenes from Surfaces to Food. Applied and Environmental Microbiology, 82(21), 6490–6496. <https://doi.org/10.1128/aem.01838-16>

BURNT FOOD CAUSES CANCER

When starchy foods are cooked at high temperatures for a long time, a chemical called acrylamide becomes more abundant. In the past, there have been studies that connected consuming acrylamide to incidences of cancer, which is where the initial worry of eating burnt food is sourced. However, the only studies that clearly illustrated this link used animal participants, and their experiments involved around 1,000 to 100,000 times more acrylamide than what a person would normally be exposed to in food. There is a lack of quality evidence that shows that the chemical in burnt food can cause cancer in human beings, so unless more research on the topic is conducted, this myth is safely deemed false.

Alexander, H. (2022, March 4). 5 facts about acrylamides in food. MD Anderson Cancer Center. <https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/5-facts-about-acrylamide-and-food-and-cancer-risk.h00-159538167.html>

PUTTING YOUR WET PHONE IN RICE SAVES IT FROM DAMAGE

When people "life-threateningly" drop their phone in water, a common method they resort to is to put it in a bowl of uncooked rice due to its assumed ability to absorb the water. While the solution had already been disproven in the past, Apple had officially put out an advisory discouraging their customers from the practice since January 2, 2024. This is because rice's absorbance is not capable of fully ridding your phone of accumulated moisture. Moreover, there is a possibility of the rice becoming mushy inside of your phone due to the water, which would effectively worsen the issue.

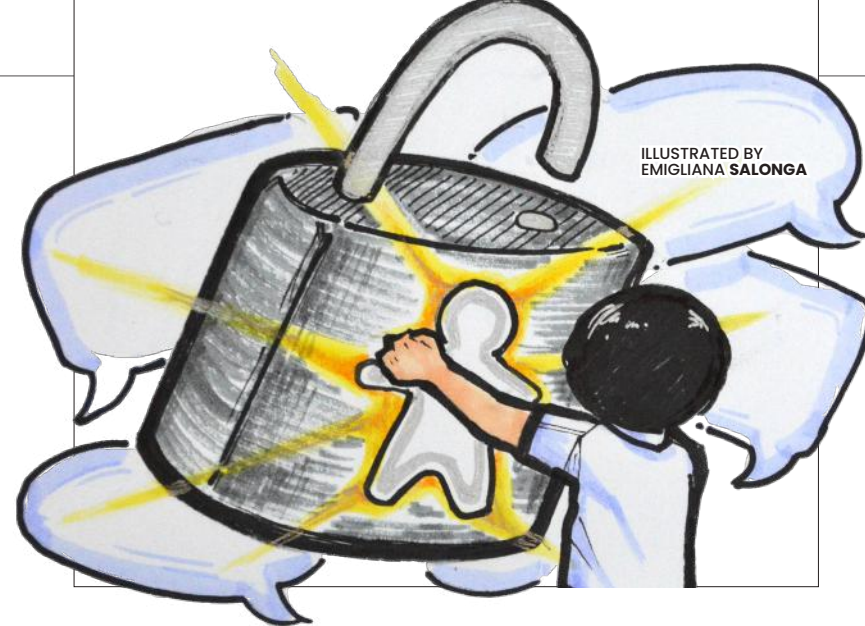
Ashworth, B., & Bonnington, C. (2024, February 21). How to dry off a soaked iPhone (Don't use rice). WIRED. <https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-rescue-a-wet-phone/#:~:text=Rice%20was%20never%20really%20a,hidden%20deep%20within%20your%20phone>

A WOLF PACK IS LED BY A MERCILESS "ALPHA WOLF"

In nature, wolves have been observed to gather in groups called "packs," defined as a bonded family unit of wolves that reside in an established territory. One common belief is that these wolf packs are dictated by a strict hierarchy based on dominance, wherein a strong male and female pair lay at the very top after having endured and winning a multitude of vicious duels. This conclusion on alpha pairs was made due to past captive studies that examined unrelated wolves' interactions in confinement. However, the reality is that in the wild, wolf packs are exactly how they are described—a family, with them typically composed of the descendants and relatives of a breeding pair (or multiple, in some cases). The pack is still guided by the breeders, but this is primarily due to them being naturally dominant over their offspring and not at all because of a violent climb to the top, deeming them the "alpha."

Pappas, S. (2024, February 20). Is the Alpha Wolf Idea a Myth? Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/is-the-alpha-wolf-idea-a-myth/>

People have become more susceptible to believing in misleading information, making its dissemination an even larger threat than ever before. It is crucial for individuals to take what they see or hear with a grain of salt and, better yet, do their own research to differentiate fact from myth.

ILLUSTRATED BY
EMIGLIANA SALONGA**Augustinians place fourth in UPRI research tilt**

BY AXEL JAY LUCIO

Augustinians Rafael Viterbo, Shanjay Aberin, and Antonio Benito Bernabe of 12A, alongside research adviser Mr. John Sevilla, placed fourth in the 3-month research competition hosted by the University of the Philippines Research Institute (UPRI) and UP Intelligent Systems Center entitled Quake Quest: Unleashing Innovations in Seismology Through Arts, Engineering, and Research.

From September to November, 19 teams of high school students from across the Philippines competed to create the best scientific project utilizing UPRI's public seismic network data archive.

The Augustinian team focused their project on an earthquake-proof chopstick building design, aiming to address structural vulnerabilities in earthquake-prone areas.

Alongside this, the "datathon" featured various minor and major quests, including project proposal creation, comic strip and meme illustration, and reel production, which were assessed during the qualifying round.

Antonio Benito Bernabe, one of the team members, shared that their meme and reel creations revolved around themes featuring ducks, creatively using a wordplay from "Quake Quest" to "Quack Quest."

The top five performing schools advanced to the final round, where each team presented their projects in front of a panel of judges, culminating at the University of the Philippines-Diliman on November 23, 2024.

"The contest itself kept me on my toes as my team members, and I had to keep up with weekly crash courses and deadlines, but in the end, we managed to end up in the top 5," reflected Bernabe, one of the participants.

Quake Quest aims to deepen students' understanding of seismic phenomena while honing their research skills through innovative projects based on UPRI's seismic data archives.





Not just "bad at math"

BY MIGUEL JOAQUIN PASCUAL

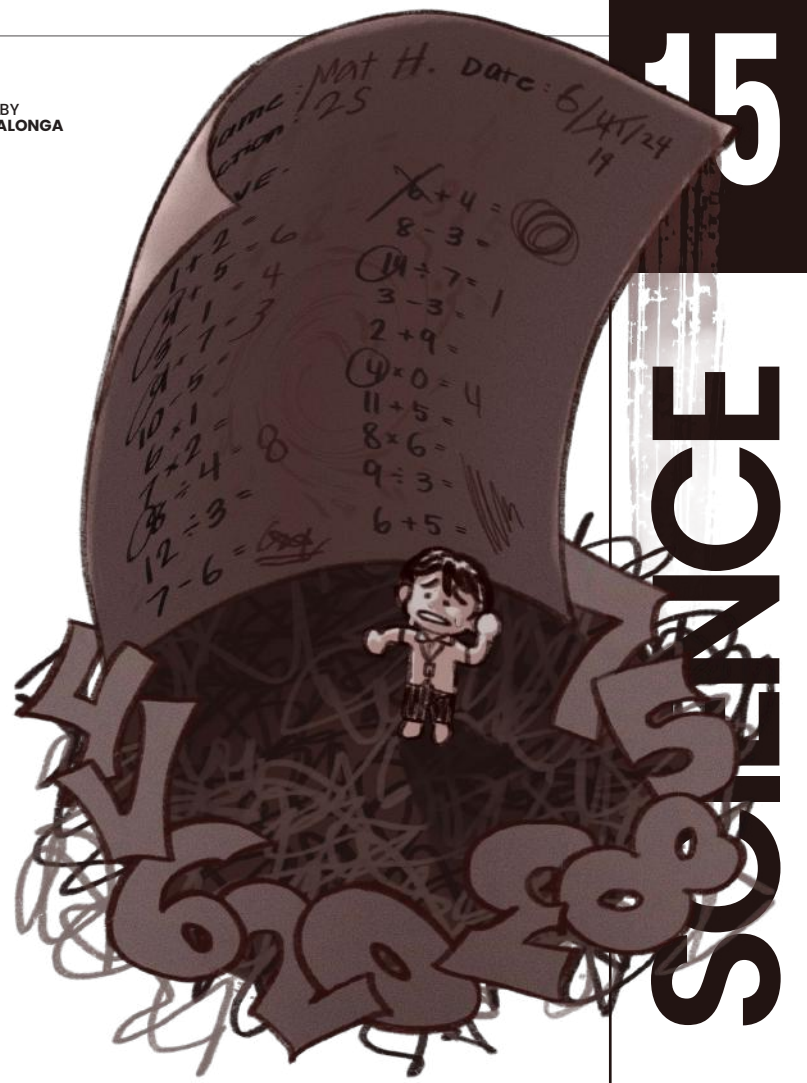
Pythagoras, an ancient Greek philosopher and mathematician, once said that, "The world is built on the power of numbers". With everyday functions involving the use of numbers and figures, such as telling the time, calculating expenses, and managing dates, it is safe to say that he was right in this reasoning.

We, as a society, are heavily dependent on numbers, allowing it to dictate the value of goods, influence decisions, and even shape perceptions. In one way or another, numbers somehow became a shared language we all speak regardless of nationality or ethnicity. But not all of us are born with the innate understanding of this language—there are those who genuinely struggle and are challenged, particularly by a condition called dyscalculia. Many of us are familiar with dyslexia, a neurological learning disability that affects the ease with which someone reads and writes. Dyscalculia can be considered dyslexia's twin in one way or another, focusing instead on various difficulties with arithmetic. Those afflicted with dyscalculia struggle with simple calculations, problem solving, and pattern recognition. On the surface level, we might initially associate dyscalculia with its effects on academic performance, especially in mathematics-based courses, but it has more impacts than one might think, especially in real world contexts. Individuals with dyscalculia typically encounter everyday challenges that most of us usually take for granted. For instance, managing personal finances can be overwhelming for them due to difficulties in understanding budgets, tracking expenses, or calculating change. One misconception about

dyscalculia is that it is just "being bad at Math". This definition is far from what it truly is—individuals with dyscalculia are physically limited by this condition and typically require a professional diagnosis. It is not as simple as needing a calculator to get by. Additionally, undiagnosed individuals are usually subjected to social isolation and feelings of anxiety—tasks that come easily to others are significant struggles for them. This is especially relevant to us Filipinos, who place a high value on academic performance. A study by the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development showed that at least 60% of Filipino students experienced moderate to severe academic stress, negatively affecting their health. For individuals with dyscalculia, this means overwhelming stress, pressure, and self-doubt, without understanding that their struggles come from a neurological limitation. It is important to recognize that these people are not "less capable"; they simply perceive and interact with the world differently. In fact, dyscalculia does not limit a person's potential—Cher, American singer and actress dubbed "Goddess of Pop", is reported to have struggled with it. This highlights how important it is that we give these individuals opportunities to grow and thrive, rather than sitting back and allowing them to be shunned by society for their struggles.

Now, more than ever, is the time to realize the struggle these people face everyday—fostering inclusivity and helping them realize that their struggles are valid and acknowledged. This means providing proper support systems, raising awareness, and creating uplifting environments. Schools can implement programs that identify and support students with learning disabilities early on, ensuring they receive the accommodations they need to succeed. The best thing we can do for these individuals, as teachers, parents, and students alike, is to recognize the condition's signs and respond with understanding and empathy rather than judgment. Urging our leaders for educational reform is also a valiant effort to advocate for those with dyscalculia and other learning disabilities. This would involve integrating learning disability recognition into teacher training programs, revising curricula to accommodate different learning styles, and funding nationwide public awareness campaigns to educate the public and promote early disability recognition. We must strive for inclusivity and empowerment—these people have untapped potential just like any of us and can contribute to society in countless meaningful ways. Exclusion is a thing of the past, and the future can be a space for us all if we work together and believe in this shared cause.

ILLUSTRATED BY EMIGLIANA SALONGA



People with disabilities are just as worthy as any of us to lead successful and productive lives. It is time to recognize that disability does not mean inability. It has never been a question of what we can and can't do—it's always been about learning how to come together and helping one another rise above all else. After all, hasn't there always been an "ability" in disability?

editorial

WASTE NOT (?) WEDNESDAY?

Today, the environmental crisis persists as a cause for concern, worsened by the overwhelming waste produced by communities. According to a Statista report by Christy Balita, the Philippines amassed an estimate of 60,500 metric tons of solid waste daily in 2023.

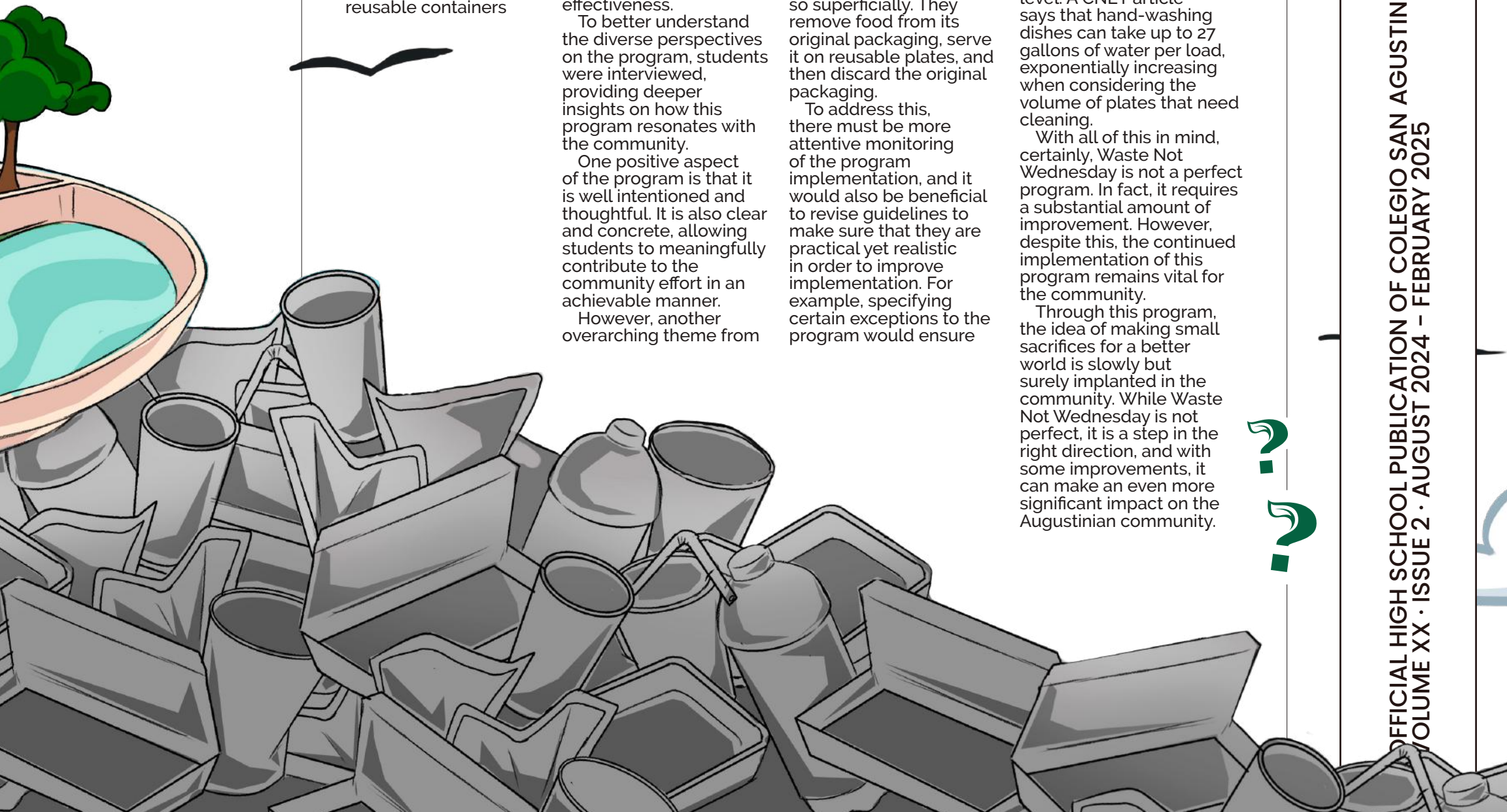
As an institution, Colegio San Agustin - Makati (CSA) has a responsibility to initiate action in an effort to create a more sustainable planet. In light of this, CSA implements "Waste Not Wednesday", where every Wednesday, reusable containers

replace the normal take-out containers in the cafeteria. However, the program, though simple, has attracted varying perspectives and polarized views, sparking debate on the program's concept and implementation's effectiveness. To better understand the diverse perspectives on the program, students were interviewed, providing deeper insights on how this program resonates with the community. One positive aspect of the program is that it is well intentioned and thoughtful. It is also clear and concrete, allowing students to meaningfully contribute to the community effort in an achievable manner. However, another overarching theme from

the responses was that the program suffers from a weak execution. This is manifested in different ways. Some stalls blatantly ignore the initiative and continue to offer disposable paper packaging. While others do comply, they do so superficially. They remove food from its original packaging, serve it on reusable plates, and then discard the original packaging. To address this, there must be more attentive monitoring of the program implementation, and it would also be beneficial to revise guidelines to make sure that they are practical yet realistic in order to improve implementation. For example, specifying certain exceptions to the program would ensure

that stalls do not simply comply for the mere sake of compliance. Another point of contention with the program is its potential to produce water waste. While this may seem unimportant in hindsight, it becomes a reasonable argument when analyzed on a deeper level. A CNET article says that hand-washing dishes can take up to 27 gallons of water per load, exponentially increasing when considering the volume of plates that need cleaning. With all of this in mind, certainly, Waste Not Wednesday is not a perfect program. In fact, it requires a substantial amount of improvement. However, despite this, the continued implementation of this program remains vital for the community. Through this program, the idea of making small sacrifices for a better world is slowly but surely implanted in the community. While Waste Not Wednesday is not perfect, it is a step in the right direction, and with some improvements, it can make an even more significant impact on the Augustinian community.

ILLUSTRATED BY ELIZABETH ANCAJA



sportsfeature

OLYMPIANS OF CSA

THE TECHNIQUES OF COACH DONNIE AND COACH WEENA

BY ADRIEL SKY ALVIAR AND VINCENT BENEDICT YEPES

From the world stage of the Olympics to the field of education, Taekwondo coach Donald "Donnie" Geisler and Badminton Coach Maria Amparo "Weena" Lim serve to pass the torch onto the passionate children of Colegio San Agustin. However, there is more depth to just training athletes, since, to them, coaching is like being the second parent of their students.

Starting as students themselves, they knew that greatness had to be earned. Day-in-day-out, their discipline stuck them to their routines of waking up early to start their training and building their fitness until the day ended. But even after training, they sustained their commitment by watching her health for Coach Weena and experimenting with specialty kicks for Coach Donnie. They knew that, in coach Donnie's words, "The secret, really, to being an Olympian or a champion is really putting in extra effort, hard work, and ultimately, it's a lot of sacrifice."

Their efforts paid off in the years to come as they garnered medals and propelled their careers. Coach Weena earned a bronze in the 1997 Southeast Asian Games, as well as six gold medals, and a doubles champion title in the Arab Badminton Championships in Australia. She also was the Philippines' singles, mixed doubles, and ladies' doubles champion of the Philippines. Coach Donnie was a member of the national team since he was 15. In 1996, he earned bronze at the first World Taekwondo Junior Championship 1996 and would continue earning

medals of every rank throughout the 2010s in national championships. Most importantly, in Atlanta in 1996 for coach Weena, in Sydney in 2000, and in Greece in 2004 for coach Donnie, they were the first Filipinos to represent the country in their respective sports.

Eventually, the two retired from their national teams and started coaching as a career. For coach Weena, she started learning how to coach since she was on the national team as a way of giving back. There, she developed an initial love for teaching and nurturing. She started

coaching officially in CSA at the age of 28 in 1997. Coach Donnie's start was in 2008, when he started his now multi-branch business, the Donnie Geisler Taekwondo Training Center, in partnership with the Arts and Sports Enrichment Program (ASEP) of CSA.

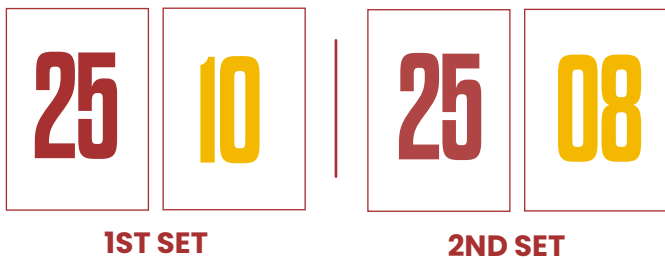
It was here in CSA that they gained the love of coaching. Alongside life lessons, they were taught how to be active and healthy through their exercises and diets while balancing their academics. They felt their role in these children's lives as their second parents: "Coaches don't just serve as a teacher of the sport but a mentor of life," according to Coach Weena. The value of training was to teach their students the discipline and grit they needed in life. They knew that not all of them strived to be Olympians themselves; some had special needs while some simply had other passions, but they supported them

nonetheless. Coach Donnie cited that his students in CSA are actually non-athletic kids, "As long as they grow up to become successful, good, honest, respectful people, then I know I've done a good job."

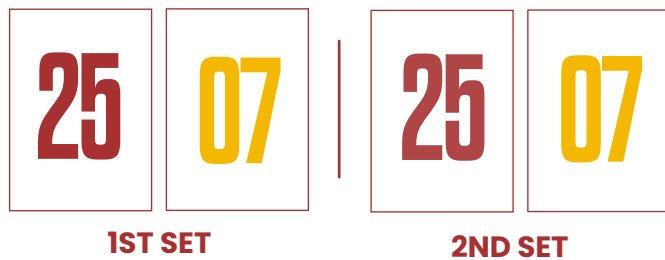
The value of being an Olympian is its philosophy. Olympism is placing sports at the service of humanity. To use sports to become a role model that educates for excellence, respect, and friendship. Though these coaches hope that one day, they may build an Olympian, their eyes are set on the values they may teach their students.

BREAKDOWN

CSA GVT vs BSM



CSA GVT vs Noblesse International School



CSA GVT vs CSR



STANDOFF. CSA's GVT prepares to block and claim victory over BSM for a spot in the finals. PHOTO BY DESIREE TINGSON.

GVT goes undefeated thrice at BSM Sports Term 1 prelims

BY ADRIEL SKY ALVIAR

Facing three teams last October 5, CSA's Highschool Volleyball Girls breezed through 2-0 in all games with ace streaks, booking a spot in the finals after British School Manila's (BSM) Sports Term 1 Volleyball Preliminaries.

Battling BSM White first, set one was initially tight until 15 minutes in when Anika Pascua went behind the service line and scored 8 aces together with 2 spikes by Patricia Moreno which widened the gap to 25-10. Set two was kickstarted by tough targeting of one BSM back-liner, followed by a distributed offense by CSA that brought it to a 25-8 resolution, 2-0 overall.

Against a noticeably shorter and inexperienced Noblesse International School, CSA took advantage of their vulnerable formation and open front line to break apart their defense and forced Noblesse to make no spikes throughout the first set that ended in 25-7. Mostly repeating the same strategy in the second, the set ended when Captain Katrina Lopez had a crushing 12 aces out of 14 serves to mark another 25-7 on the board. In their final match,

another distributed offense brought another wide gap to the scoreboard against Colegio De Sta. Rosa (CSR). Unexpectedly, Pascua sprained her ankle after she blocked a spike and had a faulty landing. Despite this, CSA commenced its push to 25 while CSR was left at 12. The last set ended at 25-8 with 14 aces scored throughout the team, guaranteeing their spot at the October 12th finals.



SCHOOL PUBLICATION OF COLEGIO SAN AGUSTIN-MAKATI
ISSUE 2 · AUGUST 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025

WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?
UNDEFEATED

SEE STORY ON 20

OF
VC

“

Though these coaches hope that one day, they may build an Olympian, their eyes are set on the values they may teach their students.

GRIT. Coach Donnie and Coach Weena instills values and ethics to their fellow students, embodying the service of a true olympian.

PHOTO BY DESIREE TINGSON.



alumnionspot

SWIMMING THROUGH SETBACKS

ALYSSA POGIONGKO

BY ARIELLE TATIANA MACARANAS

Have you ever experienced losing your training place and home, twice in your career? That's the case for Batch 2016 Alumna Graduate, Alyssa Nicole "Yssa" Pogiongko. The oldest of 3 siblings from a whole extended family of swimmers, and her mother being a former varsity athlete herself, she would casually compete against her brother in the pool at a young age. Swimming was natural for her and her love for the sport grew early, joining CSA's varsity swim team in second grade, later becoming its captain in her fourth year of high school and at the University of the Philippines swim team in her fourth year in college.

In her early years, CSA's gymnasium was still under construction with no pool whilst the team had only a few athletes. Despite this, her coaches, Olympian medalist coach Akiko Thompson, PWD national athlete coach Arnel Aba, and Coach Doll Disini, still committed to the team and had them practice. They organized training sessions at other swimming clubs, where Pogiongko became a member of the Valle Verde Aqualasers swim team. Training began promptly at 4:30 PM, with Pogiongko heading straight to practice after school. This rigorous schedule not only honed her swimming skills but also instilled a strong work ethic and discipline. Under the guidance of her coaches, Pogiongko had the opportunity to compete in various competitions, which ultimately prepared her for nationally-level events and set the stage for her future as a collegiate athlete.

This experience shaped her mindset that "I could do more." She stated that CSA exposed her to different and unique aspects of life, that life is more than living. CSA helped her build her foundation as an athlete, as a student, and as a person. It wasn't just being an athlete; it was more than that to her. To her, swimming

was a passion and something that she loved doing.

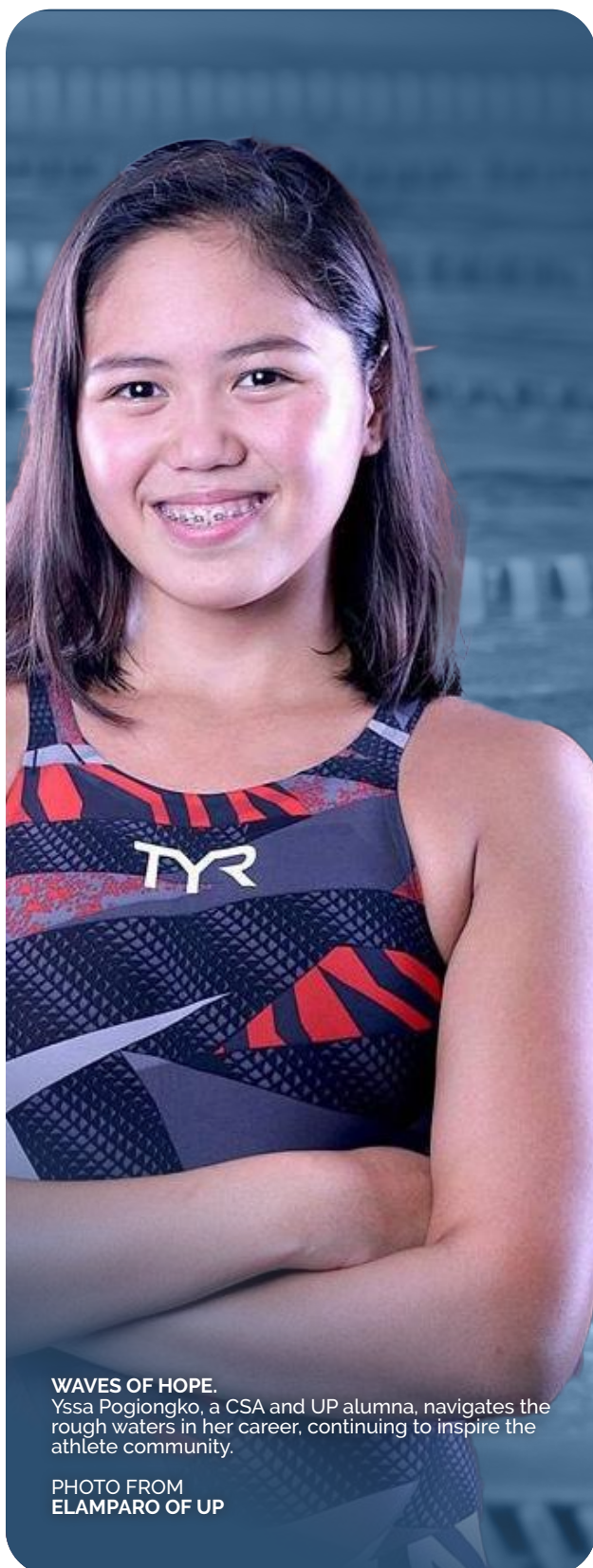
In her words, "Since I entered UP, UAAP was my target to compete and represent my university." Since her fourth year of high school, she has been trying to be a part of the UP swimming varsity team, often going to UP to introduce herself and her record as a student-athlete. She described UP as scary for some people, having to deal with many challenges. But that wasn't the case for her; she liked that freedom, and her goal was to be a part of the UP varsity swim team despite being recruited by other schools.

In her first year as a freshman, UP was declared champions. And in her second year, UP won second place -- but to her, they felt like champions. In her last year at UP, they lost the pool and had nowhere to train, as UP wanted to renovate and fix the pool as they were preparing for another season of UAAP. As the captain, she and her team faced great struggles. And in her own words, "This is where the true values of being an Alumni came out. Both from CSA and UP." Their alumni from CSA and UP were offering them places to train, "You can train here!" and in these moments, she realized how lucky she was. And her last year without a pool is how she ended her career.

Alyssa took up the Bachelor of Public Administration and is now a part of the Climate Change Commission under the Office of the President. She wanted to practice what she studied in UP, and she was overjoyed that she could live out her goal. CSA really does shape who you are, and given Yssa's success, it's been proven. Swimming molded her into who she is today, and without CSA, she would have never carried out those values. In her own words,

"Doing what you love and something that you're passionate about, you really do grow as a person. Even what you experience in the future with your jobs, how you would treat your colleagues, and how you deliver your tasks are because of the good foundations that are set. For me, that good foundation was CSA, a foundation that I've had since the beginning."

Alyssa cared about her teammates' well-being, their drive, and their unity as one team more than individual medals that collect dust over time. In the own words of Alyssa Pogiongko, "It's not about the medals that you win; it's all about the values that you learn from being in a sport. The discipline and determination add up to who you really are as a person."



WAVES OF HOPE.

Yssa Pogiongko, a CSA and UP alumna, navigates the rough waters in her career, continuing to inspire the athlete community.

PHOTO FROM ELAMPARO OF UP

LA REMONTADA

CSA beats Don Bosco to represent Makati in Palarong Pambansa

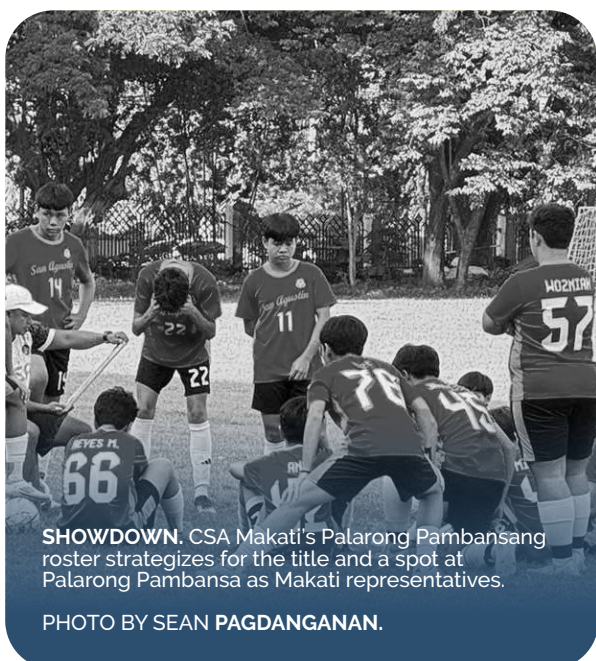
BY SEAN LAWRENCE PAGDANGANAN

Palarong Pambansa roster containing 2007-born players and up of Colegio San Agustin-Makati beat Don Bosco Technical Institute of Makati on the 26th of November to become Makati City's representative in the Palarong Pambansa.

CSA was aggressive right from the kickoff, with Zac Mitchell (9E) getting an early chance in the game blocked by Don Bosco's tenacious defensive line. Multiple set pieces from captain Dyango Echter (11A) and Sancho Jardeleza (9G) resulted in the ball being put into areas for goal-scoring opportunities but none were converted.

Don Bosco proceeded to score an early goal through their preferred tactics of playing long balls, making it 1-0 but Zac Mitchell (9E) was able to equalize the game with a chipped shot over Don Bosco's goalkeeper. Near the end of the half, Zac Mitchell (9E) put Jeyan Papa (8H) through on goal and he calmly slotted the ball into the bottom left corner past the keeper to put CSA up 2-1.

The second half kept the same intensity as the first, with Don Bosco trying their hardest to equalize with their attempts put to a halt by CSA's keeper Enrique Inigo Sunico (7H). Both teams went back and forth then Jeyan Papa (8H) scored from an offside position. The last minutes contained time-wasting tactics until the game finally ended with CSA Makati on top, 2-1.



SHOWDOWN. CSA Makati's Palarong Pambansang roster strategizes for the title and a spot at Palarong Pambansa as Makati representatives.

PHOTO BY SEAN PAGDANGANAN.

BVT gets fourth place in BSM Sports Term 1

BY ARTHUR BRUNDELL GALICIA

Colegio San Agustin's Boys Volleyball Team (BVT) placed 4th at British School Manila (BSM) Sports Term 1 Tournament last October 12, suffering a double defeat 0-2 against Greenfield International School (GFIS), 1-2 Beacon Academy (BA) despite heavy offense.

The spikers clashed in their first match against GFIS as Kei Takagi (11E) led most of CSA's offense. Their defense was crushed against the power of GFIS's spikes, leading to a loss of 13-25 in the first set. GFIS then took the lead in the second set and continued their domination against CSA until Enzo Gallego (12I) and Ynigo Beuno (11G) managed to score multiple streaks that closed the score gap; however, they still lost 21-25.

In the battle for bronze versus BA, CSA took an early lead with powerful spikes by Takagi and Gallego. Beacon Academy quickly gained momentum, staying close behind and causing CSA to shift in and out of the lead. This back-and-forth battle ended with CSA narrowly losing the first set 26-28.

Conversely, CSA took a 25-19 victory in the second set through a harsher offense of spikes and serves. In the final set, despite numerous aces, CSA lost a major lead after a disputed four-touch error disrupted CSA's rhythm and allowed BA to gain on CSA and eventually win 14-16, placing CSA in fourth place.

FOOTWORK. The Philippines unleashes its attack strategy against Vietnam at the ASEAN Women's Championship 2024.

PHOTO FROM PHILIPPINES FOOTBALL FEDERATION



sportsfeature

HISTORIC KICKOFF

Inaugural FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup to be held in PH

BY SEAN LAWRENCE PAGDANGANAN

Futsal, often dubbed "Indoor Football," is celebrated for its fast-paced and technical gameplay. Played with a smaller, heavier ball on a compact court, it requires players to exhibit exceptional skill and agility. This unique format has nurtured some of football's greatest talents, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, and Neymar.

On the women's side, Amanda Lyssa de Oliveira Crisóstomo, known as "Amandinha," stands out as a beacon of excellence in futsal. Considered the best female futsal player in the world, Amandinha has won the Women's Futsal Best Player award eight consecutive times from 2014 to 2021. Her journey reflects the incredible potential that futsal holds for athletes around the globe.

Amandinha and other prominent names in the futsal world expressed their admiration and praise for the 2025 FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup. Irene Samper, who plays for the Spanish national team was overwhelmed with joy, even letting out tears upon receiving the news about the World Cup. For a long time, FIFA has delayed hosting the event due to the pandemic and logistical issues; even after heavy criticisms from top names, it was unsure whether FIFA was going to follow through with the competition. However, they have announced that on May 15, 2024, the event will be held in the Philippines in 2025, with the cities of Cebu, Iloilo, and Manila as the target areas. Now, women players will have a chance to show their talents on an international stage.

Amandinha and other futsal stars are buzzing with excitement for the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup, set to take place in the Philippines from November 21 to December 7, 2025. Spanish national Irene

Samper couldn't hold back her tears of joy upon hearing the news, reflecting on the long-awaited nature of this event after delays due to logistics and the pandemic. FIFA's announcement on May 15, 2024, targets the cities Cebu, Iloilo, and Manila as the hosts of the tournament, finally providing women players a global platform to showcase their skills and marking a significant step forward for women's Futsal.

For the Philippines, this is the first time that a FIFA World Cup event has been held in the country. After a herculean effort to qualify the "Filipinas" (Women's football team) for the Women's World Cup in 2023, the Futsal World Cup starts a new chapter for the sport in the country. According to FIFA Director of Tournaments Jaime Yarza, he disclosed that the Philippines' hosting rights were based mostly on the exceptional work done by the PFF (Philippine Football Federation) to promote Football/Futsal to the youth and the growing tendencies of young girls wanting to play Futsal was a key element in the Philippines winning the bid over other nations like Brazil, Spain, and Italy. Similar to the FIBA World Cup held in 2023, the Futsal World Cup in 2025 provides us with another chance in two years to showcase our culture and attractions to the world once again. This would boost our tourism and increase our revenue, helping our economy. In the long term, the World Cup can bring about

business opportunities, such as big clubs starting academies around the country, which would massively help with the development of youth talent in the Philippines.

The Philippines automatically has a spot in the tournament as the hosts and will be competing against 15 other teams to win it all. The Filipino people are encouraged to cheer their national team on by the PFF President John Anthony Gutierrez to boost morale and show the world what the Philippine program and way of playing futsal can do.



Similar to the FIBA World Cup held in 2023, the Futsal World Cup in 2025 provides us with another chance in two years to showcase our culture and attractions to the world once again.

Beyond the Philippine Sports System's Gold and Glory

With the whole world watching, the Philippines was showcased in the Paris Olympics, and it had the potential to reach the pinnacle of the world's biggest stage. Filipino athletes such as Carlos Yulo, Nesthy Petecio, and Aira Villegas were all trailblazers, bringing home medals for the Philippines. Despite these victories, the sports system still faces challenges and areas for improvement.

The government, through its respective departments, organizes two major grassroots competitions aimed at developing and scouting young athletes nationwide: the Palarong Pambansa and Batang Pinoy. Held annually, these events provide aspiring athletes with a professional environment to showcase their skills. By competing at the division, regional, and national levels, participants gain valuable experience that helps prepare them for future opportunities in sports.

While these competitions aim to be ideal platforms for young athletes, they face significant challenges in execution. According to a Rappler article, the Palarong Pambansa 2024 encountered organizational issues with the Cebu City government. Cebu Daily News reported that as of November, renovations at the Cebu City Sports Center (CCSC) were only 30% complete. In response, CCSC Executive Director Jovito Taborada urged contractors to expedite their work. However, the substandard condition of the track lanes at the CCSC resulted in the nullification of 11 athletics records set during the event.

Even the country's historic achievement at the Paris Olympics was not without controversy. Golfers Bianca Pagdanganan and Dottie Ardina were forced to compete without official uniforms, resorting to taping Philippine flag patches onto their attire. In response, the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) attributed the issue to logistical delays, explaining that the uniforms were held up at French customs and did not arrive on time. Still, many criticized these associations for letting the golfers compete using makeshift uniforms.

These cases are just a few examples of the challenges in Philippine sports, particularly in administration and

management, infrastructure, and funding. To ensure the growth and success of Filipino athletes, it is essential to address these issues and implement necessary improvements within the sports system.

Rooted in financial constraints, these challenges often leave athletes to rely on prize money and sponsorships to meet their basic needs. This situation contrasts with other nations that provide structured support, allowing athletes to focus solely on their training and performance. To address these issues, it is imperative that athletes and programs receive the necessary support. Enhanced funding for sports associations is crucial to ensure that infrastructures are standardized, updated, and in optimal condition for local and national competitions. This improvement would alleviate the burden on athletes, who often have to secure sports equipment, including uniforms, on their own. Inadequate facilities and equipment underscore the need for proper funding and support.

Beyond this, enhancing sports governance is also crucial for the success of initiatives like Palarong Pambansa and Batang Pinoy. These grassroots programs rely on effective management to provide young athletes with nurturing environments that foster their passion

and development in sports. Promoting transparency and accountability within city and national sports administrators ensures that emerging talents are supported by responsible individuals, likely leading to more successful outcomes.

Ultimately, Filipino athletes possess the potential to excel globally, but the shortcomings within the sports system act as barriers to this brilliance. This issue transcends the mere accumulation of medals and titles; it is about establishing a foundation that genuinely values and supports athletes throughout their developmental journey. Without decisive action, the country risks forfeiting its place on the podium with nations that have prioritized and reformed their sports infrastructures. It is imperative that the government commits to comprehensive reforms, ensuring that athletes receive the support and resources they need to shine, thereby uplifting national pride and showcasing the true spirit of the Philippines.

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Ultimately, Filipino athletes possess the potential to excel globally, but the shortcomings within the sports system act as barriers to this brilliance.

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ILLUSTRATED BY
LEGASPI CALDERON &
FRANCESCA LABO

UNDEFEATED

GVT seals championship in BSM Sports Term 1 Finals

BY ADRIEL SKY ALVIAR

UNITED AS ONE. In a fierce battle to the finals, CSA's Girls Volleyball team stands united before a round against BSM's Blue Lions.

PHOTO BY ANDREI KO.



UNMATCHED POWER. The CSA Girls Football Aspirants team dominates the RIFA Finals with a 5-0 win over San Beda with Coach Jane Penol (far left).

PHOTO BY DESIREE TINGSON.

Girls' Aspirants team win vs San Beda in RIFA Finals

BY SOPHIA ISABELLE EYADAN

Last September 15th, CSA Girls' Aspirants team faced San Beda University-Rizal's Girls' Football team at Ateneo de Manila's Ocampo Field, vying for the second-runner-up spot in the first phase of the Rizal Football Association (RIFA) Tournament.

From the opening whistle, CSA took control of the game, maintaining strong possession and displaying teamwork and coordination. With the opposition struggling to keep up, CSA managed to keep their play largely in San Beda's half for most of the match, steadily finding opportunities to score. By the end of the first half, they had already established a solid lead, setting the tone for the rest of the game.

During the second half, San Beda grew more determined to keep up. Yet, the defense swiftly cleared every attempt to bring the ball into CSA's half of the field, and every shot attempted was denied. Now, building on their strong performance during the first half, CSA maintained their control of the game, ultimately securing a 5-0 victory with goals from Lily Dee (8C), Ayesha Natividad (8C), Sabrina Tupaz (10F), and Pauleen Del Rosario (10C) who scored two of the five goals.



CSA's Girls Volleyball Team champions despite stronger opposition at the British School Manila Sports (BSM) Term 1 Volleyball Finals, remaining undefeated 2-0 against BSM Lions Blue, 2-1 against Junior Elite Volleyball Camp (JEUC).

In a narrow first-set defeat for BSM, both sides went back-and-forth at tightly scoring points with no streaks emerging. However, CSA managed to maintain a consistent 1 to 2-point lead that they carried to 25-23.

Conversely, CSA breezed through the second set, starting with an 8-point streak; CSA dominated, with BSM only scoring from CSA's errors, ending in 25-12.

In the final battle for gold, CSA faced their toughest opponent yet. They opened with a six-point streak but quickly lost the lead as JEUC answered with an eight-point run.

What followed was a series of intense rallies that tested both teams' endurance. JEUC claimed the first set, 25-20, but CSA fought back, pushing the second set into a thrilling 29-27 deuce, sealed by a powerful spike from Reggie Ang that broke JEUC's defense.

The final set showed CSA displaying a coordinated and distributed offense, with all spikers making plays for points while JEUC traced closely. At 13-14, a final spike from captain Katrina Lopez crowned CSA as the champion.



Alyssa Pogiongko: Swimming through Setbacks

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Have you ever experienced losing your training place and home, twice in your career? That's the case for Batch 2016 Alumna Graduate, Alyssa Nicole "Yssa" Pogiongko. The oldest of 3 siblings from a whole extended family of swimmers, and her mother being a former varsity athlete herself...

FINAL SCORE



CSAGVT vs BSM



CSAGVT vs JEUC



BBT crushes PAREF Southridge 77-40 on home turf

BY VINCENT BENEDICT YEPES

On October 12, 2024, during the opening day of the IDEAL League, Colegio San Agustin's Boys Basketball Team (BBT) dominated PAREF Southridge with a commanding 77-40 victory on Southridge's home court.

In the first quarter of the boys' first game in the IDEAL league, CSA started strong with a ten-point lead in the game's first minutes thanks to the exceptional 3-point shooting of Angelo Dayrit, dominant rebounding from Thristan Reyes and disruptive defense from Inigo Dela Cruz.

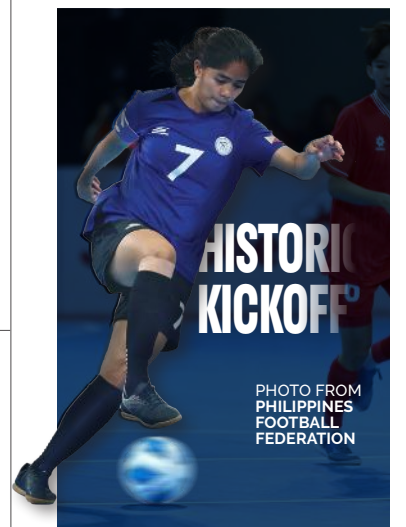
The second quarter started with Gian Taglia and Lucas Lara

utilizing all 3 levels of scoring to contribute to the win with their overwhelming proficiency in penetration and scoring inside the paint and their excellent three-point and perimeter shooting. The quarter also featured speedy guard Markiah Lastimosa, who was able to ground a solid defense against PAREF Southridge with his active defense and fast feet.

The third quarter featured most of the team's senior players, such as Kelian Chang, Taychaun Gavieres, and Vincent Yepes. Along with these seniors was team captain Tiago Diuco. This

set of seasoned players displayed stable play with the crafty passes of Taychaun Gavieres, the slashing ability of Kelian Chang, and the interior offense of both Tiago Diuco and Vincent Yepes.

The fourth quarter featured the first quarter set of players making a comeback. They maintained the lead that they created from the first quarter all the way through until the end of the game. Finishing strong with a 37-point win, the CSA basketball team won their first game of the season dominantly.



Inaugural FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup to be held in the Philippines

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Futsal, often dubbed "Indoor Football," is celebrated for its fast-paced and technical gameplay. Played with a smaller, heavier ball on a compact court, it requires players to exhibit exceptional skill...

editorial

BEYOND THE GOLD & GLORY

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