



THE EVEREST ALTIUS

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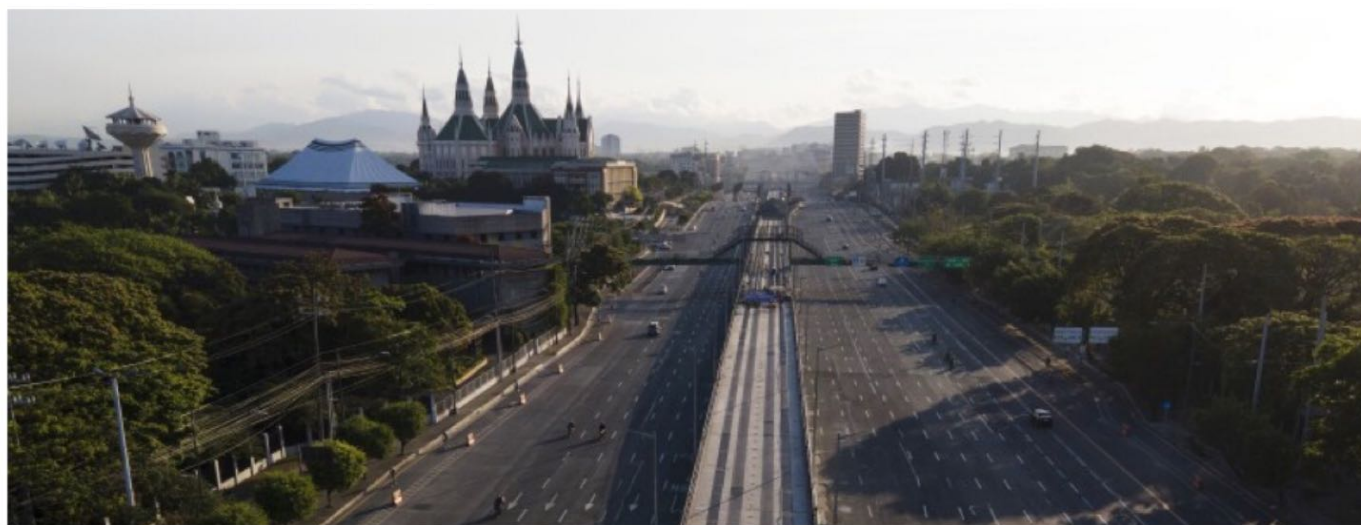


MAKING IT THROUGH TO BRIGHTER DAYS

By Niccolo Tuazon

Malcolm X once said that "education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it the today." Ever since the COVID-19 outbreak was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global pandemic and health emergency on March 11, 2020, the whole world has been in a state of lockdown. One essential industry within our society that has been adversely affected by this deadly disease was the Educational Services sector.

To prevent the speedy aggravation of circumstances, schools all around the globe abruptly had to close down and resort to the use of online learning methods. Starting September 2021, schools in first-world foreign countries like the USA have begun reopen-ing with the help of newly developed vaccines such as Moderna, Pfizer, Sinovac, Astra-Zeneca, and Johnson & Johnson that strengthened the



Empty Streets Due to Community-Wide Lockdowns
(Image Courtesy of *The San Diego Union Tribune*)

immunity of the human body against the ravages of COVID-19. However, education in our country continues to be hindered by the Coronavirus as millions of learners in the Philippines remain isolated behind their computer screens.

As a Filipino student, it is disheartening to say that the Philippines is the only country in the entire world that has yet to bring back face-to-face education. It is evident that the use of e-learning has brought about many recurring challenges and disadvantages that seriously outweigh the usual problems that come up in face-to-face classes. Most of the time, it is a tough struggle for us home learners to stay constantly focused during online sessions for long periods of time, as there are distractions all around us ranging from noisy environments within our house-holds to assaulting barrages from social media. In addition, staring lengthily at a bright monitor could lead to computer vision syndrome, which is a form of eye strain and fatigue caused by the frequent use of electronics.

Yes, how easy it is for us to endlessly complain about our situation and wish impatiently for physical schooling to resume. However, we Everest students must still find it within ourselves to realize how blessed we are despite it all and be grateful for being provided with the precious means to continue pursuing our studies during the pandemic, albeit through online learning. It is lamentable that there are presently very many Filipino students in financial hardship who cannot afford computerized equipment and access to the internet.

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Filipino Children Living in a Slum Area Eating a Meal
(Image Courtesy of The San Diego Union Tribune)

Sadly, their education is forced to come to a near-complete halt. According to statistical results gathered last year by the government, there has been a growing education gap for Filipino children in poverty, as only 18% of households have a stable internet connection at home. To further explain the dire circumstances, the Teachers' Dignity Coalition cites that "until now, after a year, many students and their families still cannot keep up with the online requirement of distance learning, especially those that have lost their livelihood due to the pandemic."

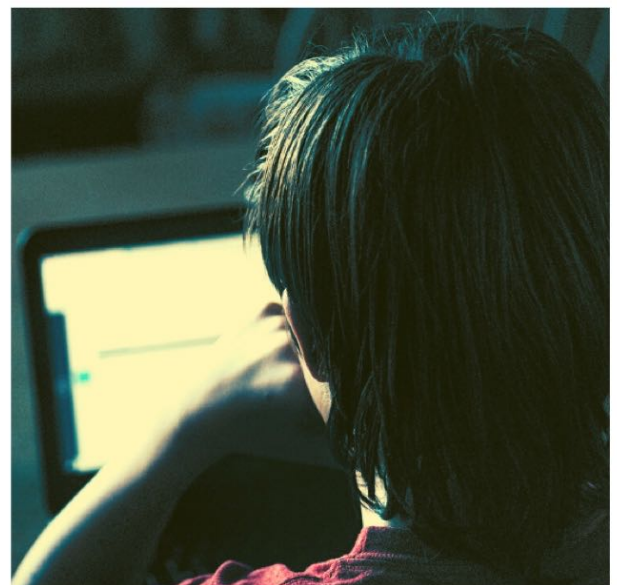
If our government permits online

schooling to persist much longer, millions of our Filipino youth will lose the chance to complete their education and fulfill their hopes of better futures for themselves and their families.

I do understand that many students feel the overwhelming stress brought about by prolonged online learning. Physical school has its own share of difficulties, but we always benefited from having other activities to do besides having to accomplish the given workload. We were able to make new friends, hang out with old ones, consult with our teachers face-to-face, play sports, join clubs that honed our interests, enjoy parties and school fairs, share meals together, and celebrate Mass as one community.

Now that most of the fun experiences we had going to school vanished in the blink of an eye, we E-learners are left alone with our thoughts, trying to block out negative vibes as we face stacks of time-consuming projects and homework on our screens. As naturally social beings, we cannot help but experience isolation, boredom, and a lack of motivation to finish our daily goals.

Indeed, there are numerous challenges that must be dealt with living in a technological world wherein education, communication, and contagion collide. Be that as it may, possessing a positive mindset, having compassion for others, and keeping the faith will empower us to keep going until we behold the light at the end of the dark tunnel. In Isaiah 40:31, we are reminded that "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." It is wonderful when we are able to recognize and savor the good that is in our



High School Freshman Logging Online For Distance Learning
(Image Courtesy of Denver's Mile High Magazine)

lives, appreciate our family at home, maintain friendships online, and seize the chance to discover and do what truly brings us joy.

As long as we persevere in putting our trust in God, helping those in need, and being there for one another, we will be able to overcome these rough times and resume our face-to-face lives once more. As author Doe Zantamata wrote, "It is only in our darkest hours that we may discover the true strength of the brilliant light within ourselves that can never, ever, be dimmed." With more vaccines from abroad gradually being made available to the youth and upcoming plans being solidified by the Department of Education to bring back physical classes by the end of this year or early 2022, there is growing hope for brighter days for the Everest community and the rest of the educational sector of the Philippines looming in the near horizon.

vs. : The 2022 Elections

BY SAM CHOY

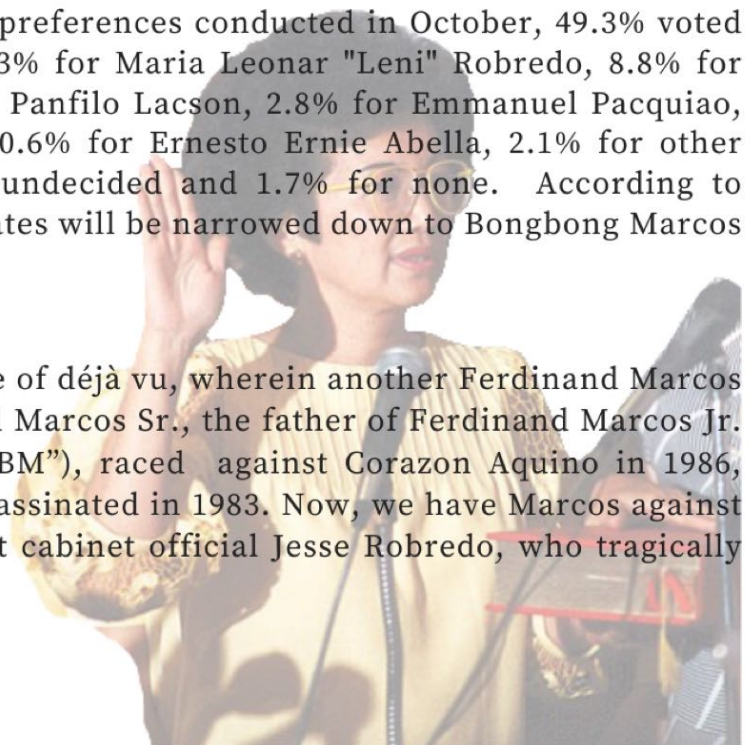
Steaming arguments and debates arise as the 2022 presidential race rings with familiar names: Mayor Isko Moreno, Sen. Manny Pacquiao, Vice President Leni Robredo, Sen. Bongbong Marcos, and Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

"Survey Says!"

In the Publicus survey on election preferences conducted in October, 49.3% voted for Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, 21.3% for Maria Leonar "Leni" Robredo, 8.8% for Francisco Moreno Domagoso, 2.9% for Panfilo Lacson, 2.8% for Emmanuel Pacquiao, 1.9% for Ronald Bato Dela Rosa, and 0.6% for Ernesto Ernie Abella, 2.1% for other candidates, with the remaining 8.6% undecided and 1.7% for none. According to recent surveys, the presidential candidates will be narrowed down to Bongbong Marcos and Leni Robredo.

Marcos vs. Robredo

This year's elections give us a sense of déjà vu, wherein another Ferdinand Marcos is up against another widow. Ferdinand Marcos Sr., the father of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (known as Bongbong Marcos or "BBM"), raced against Corazon Aquino in 1986, whose husband, Ninoy Aquino, was assassinated in 1983. Now, we have Marcos against a widowed Robredo, wife of incumbent cabinet official Jesse Robredo, who tragically died in a plane crash 9 years ago.



Former President Corazon Aquino
(Image Courtesy of Liberal International)

The 64-year old Senator Bongbong Marcos served as a vice governor and governor of Ilocos Norte for 12 years after his family's return from exile. Frequently associated with his father, he and his sister, Imee Marcos, have retained their pro-found and powerful political connections despite their family's "fall from grace". Not only was he a former congressman and governor of Ilocos Norte, but he also ran for vice president in the last elections of 2016 and lost against Leni Robredo. "We must face the challenge as one, as one country, as one people", Marcos stated in his speech upon announcing his intention to run for the presidency. "I know that it's this manner of unifying leadership that can lead us through this crisis, get our people safely back to work for all of us to begin to live our lives once again." However, as of early November, he is yet to announce his running mate for vice president as President Duterte announced his resignation from politics.



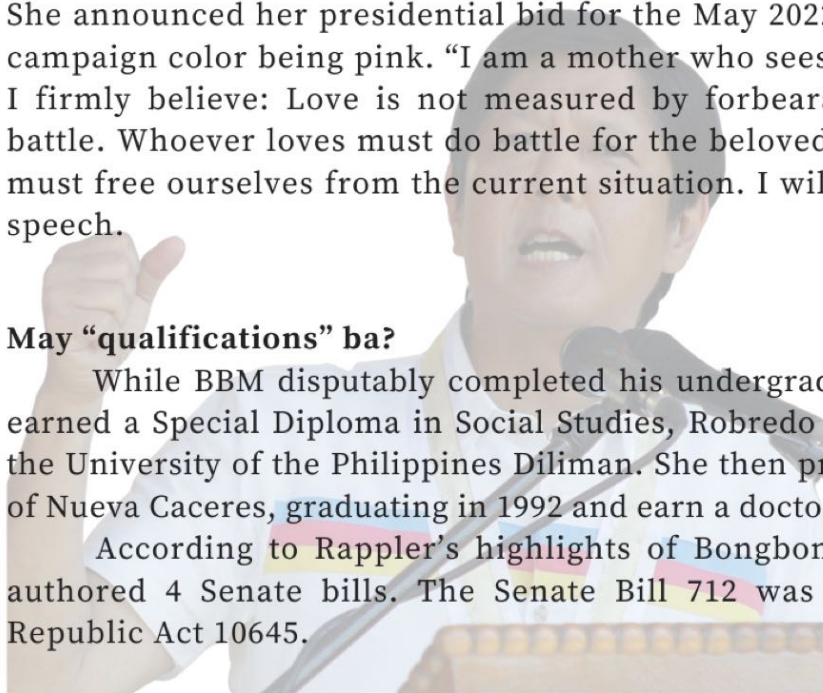
Vice President Leni Robredo -
(Image Courtesy of Rappler)

In the opposition, 56-year old Vice President Leni Robredo, a "fresh face" in politics, is a former Chairperson of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council of the Philippines and Co-chairperson of the Inter-agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs. She announced her presidential bid for the May 2022 national elections on October 7, her campaign color being pink. "I am a mother who sees the suffering of my beloved country. I firmly believe: Love is not measured by forbearance alone but by a readiness to do battle. Whoever loves must do battle for the beloved. Today, I stand with full resolve: We must free ourselves from the current situation. I will fight. We will fight", she said in her speech.

May "qualifications" ba?

While BBM disputably completed his undergraduate studies at Oxford University and earned a Special Diploma in Social Studies, Robredo earned her degree in economics from the University of the Philippines Diliman. She then proceeded to study law at the University of Nueva Caceres, graduating in 1992 and earn a doctorate in public administration in 2015.

According to Rappler's highlights of Bongbong Marcos as a legislator, he has co-authored 4 Senate bills. The Senate Bill 712 was one of the 4 that was approved as Republic Act 10645.



Presidential Aspirant Bongbong Marcos
(Image Courtesy of CNN Philippines)

Meanwhile, in the 15th Congress, he authored 34 Senate bills, 28 of which he refiled in the 16th Congress. He was a co-author of 17 more, 7 of which became Republic Acts. Among them are the Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act, the Cybercrime Prevention Act, the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, and the National Health Insurance Act.



(Image Courtesy of Inquirer.net)

On the website found on BBM's Facebook Page, it is stated that as vice governor, "he initiated the Ilocos Norte Development Plan and set up the Ilocos Norte Development Planning Project Office; established processing and storage facilities for the province's primary agricultural products such as rice, tomato, mungbean and tobacco, among other basic services such as water, power and transport province-wide; [and] expanded various roads, bridges and other basic infrastructure." Many more of these accomplishments can be visited on this page.

On the other hand, VP Robredo has authored 5 bills and has run a pandemic response that includes the vaccination of drivers in partnership with local governments; distribution of testing kits, PPE, face masks, and food packs on a daily basis since the pandemic started; housing projects, computer learning hubs, dormitories for front liners and students; free transport for front liners in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu; community e-commerce to assist public market vendors; and Bayanihan E-Konsulta.

"Get your FACTS right, right?"


Whether it be BBM or Leni, Pacquiao or Isko, it doesn't hurt to fact-check or research on these topics. As non-legal voters and students, let us make an effort to be more conscious of our "unconscious assumptions" based on the things we surf and see on the internet. Either wanting to discredit someone or uplift their reputation, authenticating and validating resources is important as it ensures that information is presented without spreading what is commonly referred to as "fake news".

As Neil Armstrong said, "Research is creating new knowledge". Let research be one of our instruments in choosing the leader our country needs the most today.



Manila Mayor Isko Moreno

(Image Courtesy of *the Manila Bulletin*)



HEROES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BY WYNONA NG

Nurse Assisting Intubated Patient
(Image Courtesy of CNA Insider)

Before you carry on reading this article, imagine yourself in the shoes of a Philippine healthcare worker. To begin with, the process of becoming a nurse is “an investment of time and money” (Chia et al., 2021). As articulated by Yasmin Ortiga, a sociologist from the Singapore Management University, it is believed to be “one of the most expensive courses that you can ever major in in the Philippines,” as it requires passing the board exam, gaining two years of experience in a Philippine hospital, and investing in language exams if you plan to work internationally. Taking all this into consideration, a nurse who would like a license to serve abroad may need up to 10 years of preparation.

Some of you may or may not know that the Philippines is the “world’s top source of nurses” because, based on studies, about “two in five of those who advance from their nursing examinations are estimated to eventually work abroad.” However, the Philippine healthcare system is one that “underpays, overworks, and under-protects.” Because of this, our country’s hospitals suffer a massive shortage of staff members, as the nurse to population ratio is an estimated 1 to 5,000.

The environment and conditions of Philippine healthcare workers have worsened due to the emergence of the current COVID-19 pandemic. This brought about the issue of the shortage of personal protective equipment, as some nurses report being made to wear the same N95 mask for five days and the same set of PPE for hours-long shifts. Due to these dangerous conditions, there was a period in which healthcare workers comprised about 13% of the Philippines’ COVID-19 cases.

I would like to share the story of Ma. Theresa Cruz, a nurse who would cheer on those who had just recovered from COVID. Her hospital’s inability to provide enough equipment to keep its staff safe forced her to purchase her own personal protective equipment.

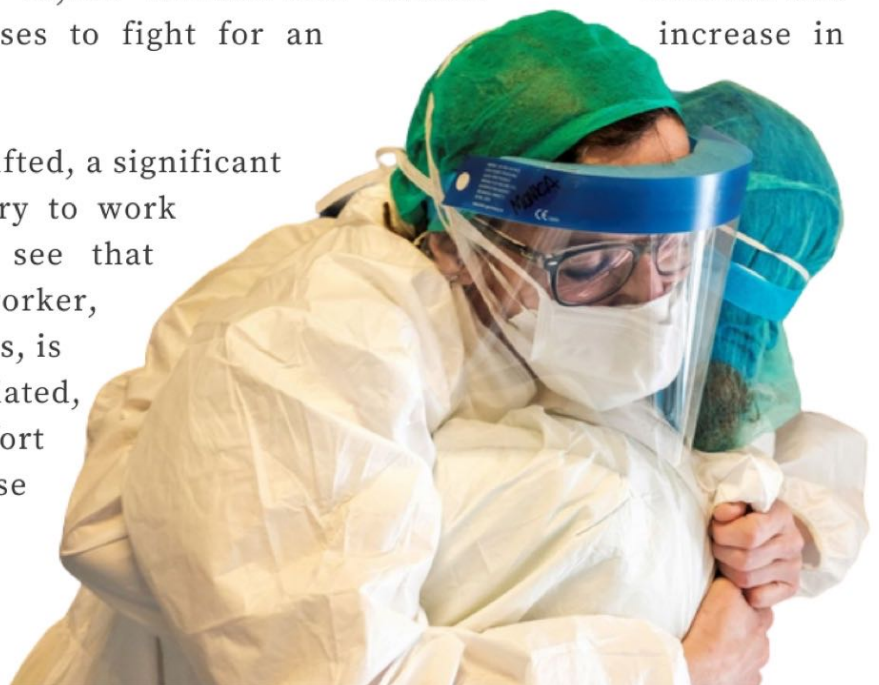
When she unfortunately contracted the virus, she communicated her symptoms to her employer, who provided her with only two rapid tests that both displayed negative results. As we know, these rapid tests are not nearly as reliable as official swab tests, so, despite her results, Nurse Cruz checked herself into the hospital. Only after developing severe breathing issues was she offered an official swab test, but she lost her life before the results were released.

In terms of their salaries, I would like to use Pauline Budy as an example. She is a nurse driven by the knowledge that she is doing “meaningful work,” as she stated that “we cater for the poorest of the poor. Most of the time, they don't have the money to buy medicine or to commute. So from our own pockets, we try to give... although we’re also buried in debt.”

Having expressed these words, it was also made known that she relies on her sister to help pay most of their bills and created an online business to support her meager income. She has been working in a Philippine hospital for about 14 years but only earns an income of \$17 a day, which is only about \$510 per month. Comparing this to the salaries of nurses abroad, working internationally allows them to earn 10 times more. In the UK, nurses earn about \$3,600 - \$4,171 and in the US, they earn about \$5,300 - \$10,756.

In light of this, it is not difficult to see why Filipino nurses opt to work overseas. However, in order to counter the shortage of healthcare workers in the country, the Philippine government was forced to limit the amount of Filipino nurses moving to work abroad. To inspire and motivate more healthcare workers to serve as front-liners, the Philippine government signed an administrative order that awards them an additional 500 pesos for every day that they work during the pandemic. Sadly, due to the lack of funds, 16,764 workers still haven’t received this hazard pay, in turn driving nurses to fight for an increase in salaries and wages.

As the deployment ban was lifted, a significant number of nurses left the country to work abroad. Through this, we can see that being a nurse or a healthcare worker, especially during these trying times, is an occupation that is underappreciated, and that we should make an effort to remember how important these heroes are in our lives.



COVID Healthcare Workers
(Image Courtesy of Business Insider)

How India's Current Power Crisis Affects the Philippines

BY ANDREA CHU

With the rising global prices of coal and power consumption, India, where more than 70% of electricity is produced from coal, is currently facing a power crisis. India, also being the world's second-largest importer and consumer of coal, has been largely affected by the sudden spike in global coal prices. Power consumption has surged due to the second wave of the COVID-19 virus earlier this year and the shortage of coal has caused power outages in several states.

Although affordable, nonrenewable sources of energy such as oil, natural gases and coal are limited in supply and cannot naturally replenish themselves. The methods by which coal is obtained are also unsustainable and harmful to the environment. The coal mining process alone releases methane, which is 87% more potent as a greenhouse gas than CO₂, and its combustion releases harmful chemicals such as sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) that contribute to the formation of acid rain.

Similar to India and most countries, the Philippines had also been overly dependent on non-renewable sources of energy. According to 2019 EIA data, the largest share of total primary energy consumption in the Philippines was petroleum and other liquids (45%), followed by coal (36%), natural gas (7%), non-hydropower renewables (7%), and hydroelectricity (4%).

Renewable sources of energy such as wind farms and solar panels, on the other hand, can naturally replenish themselves and have zero carbon emissions. Fortunately, there have been efforts to transition into a renewable energy source. In a draft of the Philippine Energy Plan, the Philippines has indicated that it will target the achievement of 35% renewable energy by 2030.



Power Lines in Bengaluru, India
(Image Courtesy of Bloomberg)

In India Today, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has said that India is set to achieve 450 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy installed capacity by 2030. As of August 2021, India had crossed the 100 GW of installed renewable energy capacity.

Through the power crisis of India, Filipinos can learn to be more mindful of their power consumption and be aware of how unreliable nonrenewable resources are. Although India and the Philippines, as well as many other countries,

are already taking action in utilizing renewable energy, every individual still has control over the amount of energy they use at home. Conserving excess energy is as simple as turning off the lights when not used. Change starts with us.

Tension Between China and Taiwan

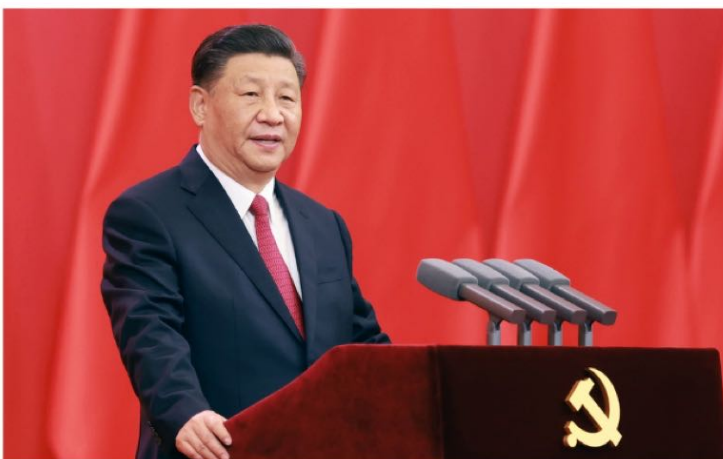
BY HANNAH SEE

With Beijing having sent over 150 military aircraft into Taiwan's air defense zone, the tension between China and Taiwan is at its worst in years. These large amphibious landing drills are the product of China's recent schemes to assert force and hint at signs of escalating tensions in the region, with Taiwan's Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng even warning the Taiwanese legislature about how Beijing may be able to launch an invasion by 2025.

Furthermore, there seems to be two levels as to how tensions between the two sides operate: Beijing having said that "it reserves the right to use force to accomplish national reunification" in its efforts to assert sovereignty over Taiwan (Rising Tension between China and Taiwan, Explained, 2021), and China's "One-China" policy incentivizing extreme nationalistic goals more than ever. As for the former of the two levels, the concern over that matter was heightened when Chinese president Xi Jinping linked the recovery of Taiwan as one of the high-priority projects in the strides towards achieving the "China dream." On the other hand, the latter of the two covers China's basic policy of reunification, preferably through peaceful means but with the chance of using force. This simple yet decisive policy is what places Taiwan under pressure, as developments over the last few years have possibly sent signals that China is becoming more assertive and losing their patience. And although Xi Jinping still insists on reunification in alignment with the 'national rejuvenation' plans that China has, this tactic has become more pointed and less flexible.



Taiwanese Military Helicopters
(Image Courtesy of The Guardian)



Chinese President Xi Jinping
(Image Courtesy of Time Magazine)

So, with this ever-growing tension, one might conclude that these present-day events are fueled by the past. The long history behind it begins with China's take on Taiwan being a part of China's sovereign territory, as Taiwan was administered by China's Qing dynasty from 1683 to 1895 (BBC News, 2021). However, Taiwan was illegitimately lost through the events that are perceived as a national humiliation and continues to face this battle with China.

DepEd Concludes Pilot F2F Classes in January

BY MEAGAN CO SAY

A recent report from the Philippines' National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) informed us of the present and lasting economic consequences of face-to-face school closure. Due to less learning and lower projected future income, productivity, and competitiveness of the generation relying on online learning, the estimated total cost of school closure over the next 40-year period is over ₱11 trillion, with each year of lost schooling

translating to around 10% permanent lower future wages. According to the World Bank, our 12 years of education is currently equivalent to only 8 years in international standards, and a survey conducted among high school upperclassmen and university lowerclassmen by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) found that 75% of respondents struggled with mental health issues during the pandemic. These staggering figures, in addition to the Philippines' already unequal access to and lower quality of education, amplify the negative effects of online classes, further enforcing how crucial it is for students to go back to at least a modified form of face-to-face learning as soon as possible.

To be sure, slight improvements have been noted over the past few months, with the number of enrollees increasing by 4%, from 26.2 million to 27.2 million, in the school year 2021-2022, and the country's preparedness to deliver remote learning in response to school closures being awarded by UNICEF across all levels of basic education.



Market Research
(Images Courtesy Shopee and Hands of Hope)

Despite such improvements, however, Filipinos have continued to eagerly await the resumption of in-person learning. Luckily, Education Secretary Leonor Briones has revealed that the trial that took place from November 15 to December 22, 2021 was “very successful.” She noted the effective implementation of in-person classes in all participating schools, with the strict observance of health protocols resulting in no reports of COVID-19 cases or any serious incidents. Given this, about 100 schools nationwide reopened for limited in-person classes, only to be closed down once more due to the recent spike in cases and the obstacles presented by Typhoon Odette, which affected 29,671 schools and 12 million learners in 11 regions.

After weeks of online learning, the declaration of Alert Level 2 this past January 31st finally allowed for the reopening and continuation of the expansion of in-person classes. Schools in areas under Alert Level 2 may continue holding face-to-face classes with both the approval of local government units and consent of parents. So far, DepEd has approved F2F classes in a total of 277 public schools and 20 private schools nationwide, including Everest International Academy. If this downward trend in COVID-19 cases continues, it is safe to say that we will continue to grow closer and closer to normal in the months to come.

Student with a Mask (Image Courtesy of iStock)

An Interview with the Student Council President

BY RAYA SOLIVEN

Since the beginning of the school year, the student council has been working tirelessly to create projects and various initiatives for the student body. From leading the High School assemblies every Monday morning to collecting donations for a recent typhoon, there is no doubt that they are taking every opportunity to serve the community. We caught up with Trixie Bondoc, the council president, to talk about how her term has been so far.

How has your experience in the student council this year been?

It has definitely been quite a struggle and pretty challenging. Because of our current online setting, it's more difficult interacting with the student body. Despite that, it's been so much fun working with my other council members, Francis, Rovin, Ricardo, and Trish, and our moderator, Mrs. Castro, especially during our late-night meetings.

Are you ready to go back to face-to-face classes? Do you have plans for when we do?

Personally, I'm super ready to go back to face to face classes! In fact, I've been praying for it since last year! The student council's projects for the second semester, in case we go back to physical classes, haven't been fully planned yet but they are in the works and we've already proposed some ideas to the directive team. For sure though, we will be having our annual Sports Fest and Spirit Week back in face-to-face classes! An idea my party proposed when we ran for council back in May was to hold a Juniors and Seniors Night back on campus, hopefully in the new sports complex when it's done and ready, sort of as a replacement for prom. We hope to promote batch unity in this project, as we've all been deprived [of it] during these past two years in quarantine.

What is your main source of motivation to do work when it's already so hard to communicate with everyone?

What motivates me to do work when it's already difficult is that I think about the wellness of the student body. I, personally, am going through many struggles during this lockdown and I know for sure that the students are as well. I made a promise to them when I ran for council last May that they would be my priority and I only want what's best for them and what will make them happy. Even though some processes are hard, I still do my best to push through them because I always go back to and remember that promise I made during campaign season, that I would do this to serve them and hopefully ease their struggles and problems in school and other aspects.



You were in the student council when we were having face-to-face classes. How would you compare those two experiences?

I was very honored to be in the 2019-2020 student council and I am very honored again to be in the current 2021-2022 student council, too. It was definitely much easier being in council back in face-to-face classes, as it was easier to coordinate and interact with the students. It was also easier to plan projects back in physical classes, as it is quite hard to brainstorm and come up with activities or ideas that the student body can do online and will enjoy.

How have you been able to balance the workload, being student council president, MYE president, and college applications?

To be honest, this school year has been the most difficult one for me out of all the twelve years I've been in this school. Balancing all these responsibilities has been such a challenge the past three months. If I learned one thing in life, it's that to be successful and reach your dreams, you have to sacrifice. I had to learn how to say no to several things so I could say yes to the three or five most important things to me. I had to learn what I had to prioritize and what could wait. I had to let go of some things that made me happy so I could work well and effectively and be more productive. As for the workload, I made a goal to start my tasks as early as possible so I can finish and submit them as soon as possible. Procrastination has been one of my weaknesses throughout Grades 9-11. It always gave me a tough and stressful time, so I wanted to finally make a change. As for the student council, I always know for sure I have four council members who have my back every time I need help with something; all our successes are always from a team effort. The same goes with Mission Youth— I have nineteen very hardworking core members who put so much soul into all the work. And as for college applications, I'm still currently in that process and will be until January, but so far it's been manageable with all the help from our guidance counselors and college counselors.

What words of advice would you give to the next student council president?

One piece of advice I could give to the next student council president is to focus more on quality rather than quantity. Don't just do something for the sake of getting several things done. Focus on one project at a time so you don't rush them. People will be able to see if your heart and soul was put into something. Make sure that you have only good intentions for your fellow students. Another piece of advice is that whenever you feel burnt out or you feel like you've lost motivation to continue your work, remember why you started in the first place. Remember your mission and vision. Remember that the student body looks up to you and is inspired by you. Remember the promises you made to them when you campaigned and ran for council. I promise that once you remember these things, they will put you back up on your feet. And last but certainly not least, don't forget I'm always here for you if you need help with anything during your term! ☺



A TRIP TO BAUKO: A CALLING REALIZED

BY ANNIKA REYES

Farming is the main livelihood of the people residing in Bauko, a municipality of the Mountain Province. However, rich it may be in agriculture, Bauko's mountainous landscape and near-inaccessible location make it challenging for the industry and its people to flourish and prosper. While the farmers initially attempted to counter the efforts of traders who took advantage of them by hiring their own trucks to bring their vegetables down to Manila, rising transportation costs left them with little to no significant profit. As a desperate recourse, they resorted to Facebook to market their produce in the hopes that someone honest and fair would patronize their goods.

As fate would have it, a biking enthusiast and restaurant owner named Francisco “Cocoy” Ignacio saw one of these posts. His decision to buy their vegetables led to his meeting Joanne Banito, a resident of Bauko. As they exchanged stories, Cocoy recalled a bicycle tour he had in Bauko in 2016, in which a midnight storm left him cold and stranded. Luckily, he found refuge in the home of Dionisio Abibico, who offered him food and a place to stay that fateful night. Since then, they have maintained a close friendship, with Cocoy visiting Mang Abibico at least once a year.

Surprised and in awe, Joanne revealed that she and Mang Abibico were related. At this discovery, Cocoy became determined to help

them as his personal way of returning the goodness Mang Dionisio showed him during that

stormy night. That was the start of Cocoy's special friendship with the farmers in Bauko Province.

He began purchasing 50-80 kg of vegetables a week for his Italian restaurant, Aveneto. Eventually, this number soon grew to 150 kg once he offered the vegetables to his family and friends. Along the way, he discovered the injustice the farmers suffered from traders. Knowing that he could do more, Cocoy was compelled to help them in any way he could. Because he wanted them to have a sustainable business that did not rely on greedy traders, they made a deal. Cocoy shared what this deal entailed when he stated:

"The farmers would bypass the traders who'd buy the produce at a low price and instead sell them directly to



me. I would buy the vegetables at a price similar to what the traders would sell in Baguio; thus, the profit would go directly to them. I would then sell the produce here in Manila at the same price as the local market."

Despite the assistance Cocoy extended to the farmers, he still felt that he could offer them more and expand their enterprise. He started recruiting friends as resellers, thus expanding the business of these farmers. As a result, what used to be a sale of 80 kg of vegetables a week has become 3000-4000 kg bought from various farmers in the province.

Furthermore, he helped them establish relationships with people he knew in the poultry and fish businesses, who sold them reasonably-priced goods such as eggs and fish to bring back to Bauko, where these supplies were limited. The farmers then sold these goods to their neighbours or bartered them for equally useful items. Now, the people of Bauko live in a sustainable community where they can enjoy the fruits of their labor.



SPIDER-MAN

Far From Home

A LOOK-BACK AND REVIEW BY PAOLO COSCOLLUELA

Over the past few months, movie fans have been waiting in anticipation for the latest addition to a wildly popular film franchise. This is none other than **Spider-Man: No Way Home**. Although it currently holds the spotlight in entertainment, I'd like to take time today to reflect on the previous installment and hopefully refresh the memories of those still planning on watching No Way Home. Spider-Man: Far From Home, directed by Jon Watts and released back in July of 2019 by Columbia Pictures, Marvel Studios, and Sony Pictures, managed to bring in \$1.132 billion at the worldwide box office, becoming the first Spider-Man film to do so.

Just like all other versions of Spider-Man, this movie follows high school student Peter Parker, who, in this particular installment, is on a school trip to Europe. Plans change when Nick Fury approaches Peter to recruit him for a mission. It is soon revealed that there is a quartet of immense elemental beasts that have emerged from an alternate reality in the larger multiverse, where a man named Quentin Beck, also known as Mysterio, who is endowed with superhuman powers, originates from as well. As the school trip moves through various European cities, we see the elementals attack the cities and wreak havoc before being defeated by Parker and Beck. Throughout all of this, Peter is forced to juggle his teenage life and relationships, as well as his duties as a superhero and his pervading feelings for love interest MJ. Later on, a layer of deception is revealed that changes the course of both Peter's life and the whole series, as Mysterio is revealed to have created the elementals as simulations and illusions. In the post-credits scene, he is also revealed to have framed Peter for using Mysterio's drones to attack and kill him. This brings to mind the theme of belief, as Mysterio is able to abuse the people's belief in a "hero" like him to pin the blame for his death on Spider-Man.

Spider-Man: Far From Home (Images Courtesy of kindpng)



Upon rewatching the film, there were various things which I noticed, reflected on, and was able to appreciate. For example, there was the part of the story in which Peter wished to focus more on his life as a normal teenage student and less as a superhero. Along with Peter's responsibilities, there also exists the weight that lingers on his shoulders after the death of his superhero mentor, Tony Stark, also known as Iron Man. Without his mentor there to guide him, he faces extreme stress and obligations, as many expect him to take over Stark's role.

Though not having yet experienced either the death of a loved one or being in the clasp of such incredible expectations as is usual with being a superhero, I can

relate to the story in such a way juggling responsibilities in real life as a teenager can be difficult sometimes, whether it be household duties, academic requirements, or social interactions, and life. I believe that actor Tom Holland was able to properly portray the role of a teenager juggling their responsibilities as best they can. The character of Mysterio also brings up several talking points, among which is his deception towards the end of the film. He states that he entered the world from an alternate reality caused by events in the film **Avengers: Endgame**. Despite how inconceivable his claim of coming from an alternate reality may have sounded, he managed to take advantage of the general craziness of the cinematic universe in order to almost flawlessly deceive the audience.

As the movie comes to a close, we are left with a post-credits scene that builds up the plot of the next movie. It was one that foreshadowed hatred and contempt for Spider-Man, and seeing Peter's apparently grim future invested me and many others enough to wait for the next offering with the palpable anguish of waiting. Using this sort of post-credits scene to build suspense and hype for an upcoming sequel has proved very effective in previous Marvel movies, and this one was no exception. It is because of this and its ability to tackle real-world and relatable issues in the middle of such an extraordinary plotline that the film is one that I will recommend for anyone who wants a good time and a superhero flick. If you loved **Spider-Man: Far From Home**, I can say without a doubt that **Spider-Man: No Way Home** will have you on the edge of your seat, because if there's one thing to know about the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it's that each installment just gets better.



(Images Courtesy of Marvel Cinematic Universe)

FROM MANILA TO THE CITY OF DREAMS

BY DENISE ANG

I must admit, as a young person yearning to see the wonders the world has to offer, I dearly miss witnessing the breathtaking views and rich cultures of different countries. Approaching almost two years of quarantine, wherein most were confined to their homes by both policy and the fear of contracting the virus, I was blessed with the wonderful opportunity of flying to Los Angeles, California, and with that, I'm excited to share my full "COVID-19: Travel Edition" story with you all!

It was quite scary when my family and I first arrived at the airport. All staff members were wearing masks, face shields, and uniforms, coincidentally similar to the green ones in the popular show, *Squid Game*. First, they needed to check if we had all the documents required in order for us to travel, ranging from our negative swab test results to our immigration forms and US Visas. Although I knew to expect some strictness, they were honestly much more rigid than anticipated.

We finally boarded our plane, where the majority of the passengers still wore their masks. Even if the others chose not to wear their face shields the entire flight, my mom encouraged us to keep both our face shields and masks on, removing them only when we needed to eat. Yes, we even kept them on when we were sleeping!

After 13 hours of turbulence in the sky, we finally landed in the City of Entertainment, the City of Dreams: Hollywood, Los Angeles!

The last thing we had to worry about on the trip was, in my opinion, having to go through immigration immediately after landing. We had persistently practiced what we were going to say:

"Purpose of Travelling?" "Visiting Relatives."
"How long are you going to stay?" "2 months."
"Where are you staying?" "West Hollywood."

You never know — they may have assumed we were frauds. We didn't want to be sent back home before our journey had even begun.

Once we got past that part, we collected our luggage and finally reached the home we were to love and cherish for the rest of our stay.

The rest of the trip is a story for another time, but I can tell you that being given the opportunity to breathe in Los Angeles air at this time is too good an opportunity to give up!

To end my story, I am very blessed to be here and to have met new people, seen many landmarks, and finally been able to walk outside after 2 years of being isolated from the rest of the world!



NBA SEASON PREDICTIONS

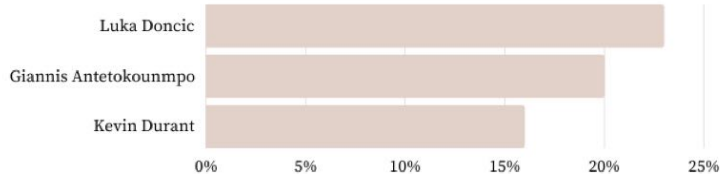
BY BELA ALBERT

As most of us know, the NBA season has started and has definitely gotten a lot more interesting. Giannis and the Bucks are attempting to get a back-to-back championship, but that will be a lot more difficult considering the Splash Brothers, Steph Curry and Klay Thompson, are expected to make a comeback this season. Not to mention the Lakers have built arguably “the most stacked team in NBA history” with LeBron James, Anthony Davis, Russell Westbrook, Carmelo Anthony, and others in the lineup. The sum of their roster is 5 MVPs, 4 Defensive Player of the Year awards, 55 All-Star appearances, 46 All-NBA selections, 8 Gold medals, 4 scoring titles, 5 rebound leaders, 5 assist leaders, and 5 block leaders. It’s hard to say who will and won’t be making the playoffs this season, so what are the predictions? The SB Nation has held a poll to gauge the general public responses to the following questions: Who will be the 2021-22 NBA MVP? Who will win the 2021-22 NBA Rookie of the year? Who will win the Eastern Conference championship? And lastly, who will win the Western Conference championship? Here were the results:

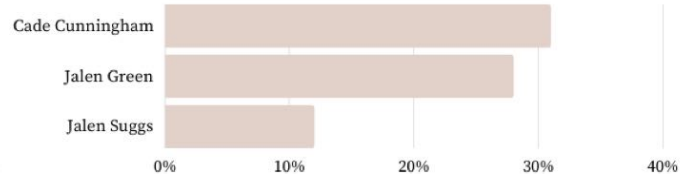


Clippers vs. Lakers
(Image Courtesy of The Los Angeles Times)

WHO WILL WIN THE 2021-22 NBA MVP?



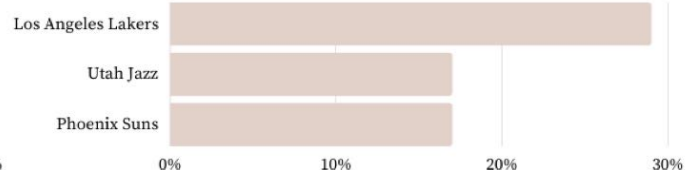
WHO WILL WIN THE 2021-22 NBA ROOKIE OF THE YEAR?



WHO WILL WIN THE EASTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP?



WHO WILL WIN THE WESTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP?



I think it’s safe to say this season is going to be a very interesting and unpredictable one. Who do you think will be making the playoffs?

Looking Back on the First Semester

BY DENISE ANG

With the conclusion of the pressure these last few months have hurled at us students, from emailing teachers for extra credit to meeting tight deadlines, we are now finally moving on to the second quarter. However, despite the stress it has brought us all, let's look back on the memories we have made so far this school year!

Although we still started the year behind a screen, new changes were clearly implemented, including a fresh new name—Everest International Academy—and a new grading system that challenges students to exert their best efforts.

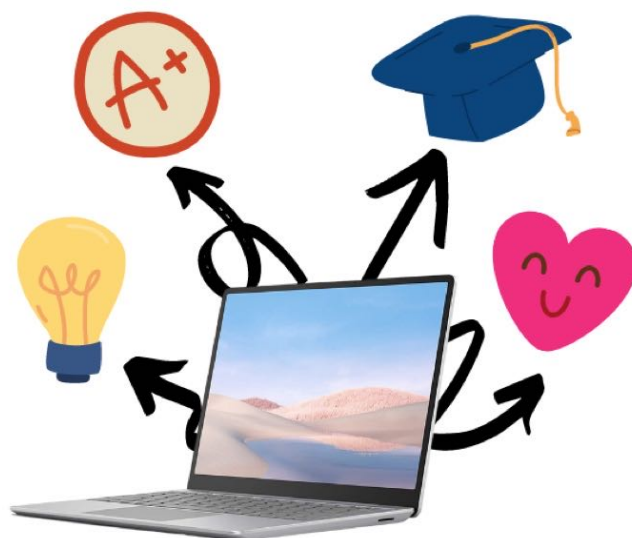
To start the semester off strong, each section created a set of class rules and goals for the rest of the year and met the different teachers for both major and minor subjects, some of whom were familiar faces and others who weren't.

Many classes saw both the sad departure of old friends to new schools and the exciting entrance of new students. My class, 11A, received three new students from different regions and countries, and we did our best to give them a very warm welcome! Although we were unable to introduce ourselves face to face, we hope that they will adjust to Everest life in the following quarters.

From my experience, we have so far managed to both learn new lessons and refresh ourselves on those we have discussed in previous years. Our teachers never fail to ensure that classes are very interesting and interactive. For example, even if I was personally afraid when I heard we were going to be studying physics this year, Mr. Sanqui made every class something to look forward to. His engaging teaching style caught my interest in the subject and made it one of my favourites.

Additionally, we have attended talks regarding cyber-citizenship that show us how to be more careful with what we receive and say online and regarding the details on the application process and student life of top universities in the Philippines, such as the University of Santo Tomas and De La Salle University, that help us further prepare and plan for our college journeys.

Overall, this first quarter has gone surprisingly well. While we can't relax just yet because we still need to prepare for the obstacles the next semester will throw at us, the Everest community has successfully gotten through this before and will surely be able to do it again, even better!

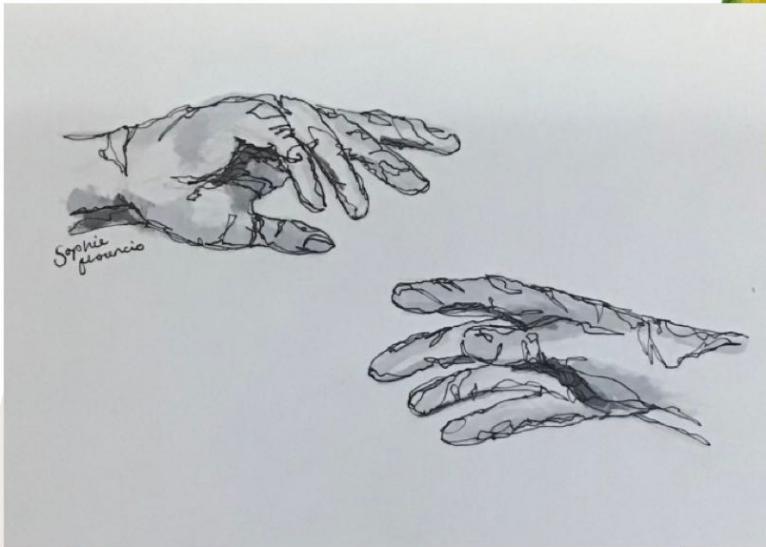
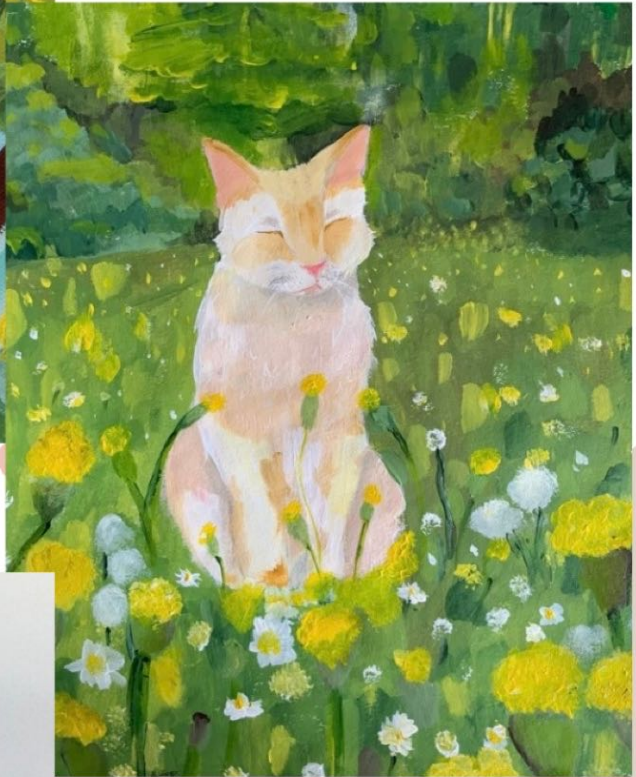


(Images Courtesy of Best Buy and Canva)

Creative Works



Aki Cheng, 10A



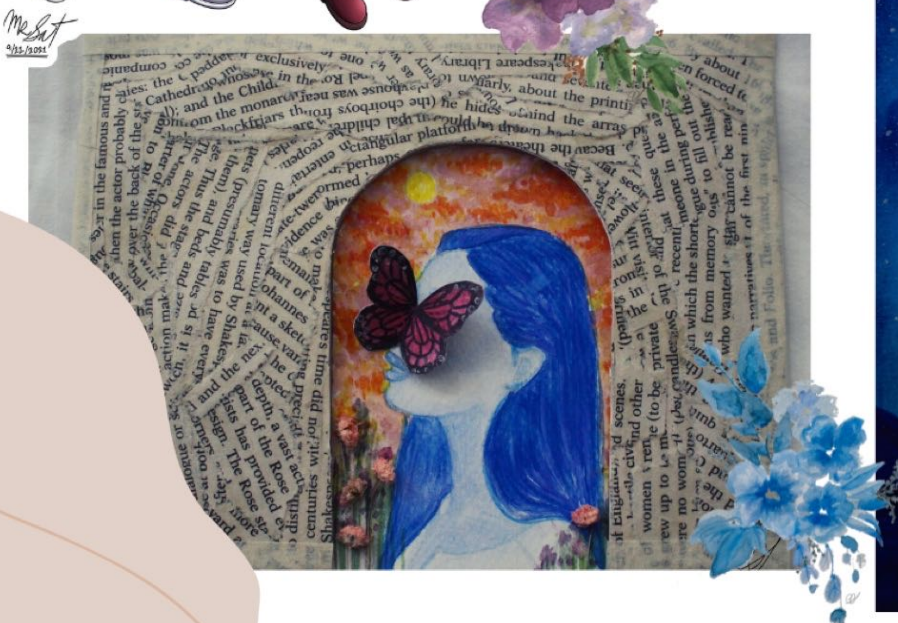
Sophie Florencio, 11A



Jed Lim, 11B



Jhudiel Silud, 12A



Dear Stony

BY ROXY FABELLA

Dear stony,
You've grown up.
The last time I saw you,
You were a small pup

Ever wondered how you got your name?
The gods cried for another lost soul
U were shivering, gray, curled up
I couldn't leave you alone

I'm sorry for your tears
for your whimpers and cuts
I wanted to stand up for you
But i didn't have the guts

Your smile was all I wanted
The angels were envious, oh so mad
Your smallness, your wagging tail
Stony, you're the best thing I ever had

If i could wipe even a single tear
If i could have you rest on my lap
I would be stabbed over and over
Just so you could have a lovely nap

It's raining there isn't it?
I'm sorry if I made you cry
It was my biggest regret, Stony
For leaving your side

