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2 jurors dismissed from Trump hush money trial, 2 others added as selection proceeds at halting pace

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two more jurors were seated Thursday for Donald Trump's hush money trial, replacing two others who were dismissed, one after expressing doubt about her ability to be fair following disclosure of details about her identity. The other juror was let go over concerns that some of his answers in court may have been inaccurate. Rather than propelling the case closer to opening statements, the latest panelists simply brought the total number of jurors picked for the case back to seven, the same number as when the day started. The halting progress underscored the difficulties in finding a panel of New Yorkers for the first-ever criminal trial of a former president. The setbacks in the selection process emerged during a frenetic morning in which prosecutors also asked for Trump to be held in contempt over a series of social media posts this week, while the judge barred reporters from identifying jurors' employers after expressing privacy concerns.



Former President Donald Trump awaits the start of proceedings during jury selection at Manhattan criminal court, Thursday, April 18, 2024 in New York.

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2 jurors dismissed from Trump hush money trial, 2 others added as selection proceeds at halting pace

Continued from Front

The seating of the full jury — whenever it happens — will be a seminal moment in the case, setting the stage for a trial that will place the former president's legal jeopardy at the heart of the campaign against Democrat Joe Biden and for weeks of testimony about Trump's private life before he became president. The jury selection process picked up momentum Tuesday with the selection of seven jurors. But on Thursday, Judge Juan Merchan revealed in court that one of the seven, a cancer nurse, had "conveyed that after sleeping on it overnight she had concerns about her ability to be fair and impartial in this case."

And though jurors' names are being kept confidential, the woman told the judge and the lawyers that she had doubts after she said aspects of her identity had been made public.

"Yesterday alone I had friends, colleagues and family push things to my phone regarding questioning my identity as a juror," she said. "I don't believe at this point that I can be fair and unbiased and let the outside influences not affect my decision making in the courtroom." A second seated juror was dismissed after prosecutors raised concerns that he may not have been honest in answering a jury selection question by saying that he had never been accused or convicted of a crime.

The IT professional was summoned to court to answer questions after prosecutors said they found an article about a person with the same name who had been arrested in the 1990s for tearing down political posters pertaining to the political right in suburban Westchester County.

A prosecutor also disclosed that a relative of the man may have been involved in a deferred prosecution agreement in the 1990s with the Manhattan district attorney's office, which is prosecuting Trump's case.

Because the juror was



Former president Donald Trump, talks to members of the media while visiting a bodega, Tuesday, April 16, 2024, who's owner was attacked last year in New York. Fresh from a Manhattan courtroom, Donald Trump visited a New York bodega where a man was stabbed to death, a stark pivot for the former president as he juggles being a criminal defendant and the Republican challenger intent on blaming President Joe Biden for crime. Alba's attorney, Rich Cardinale, second from left, and Francisco Marte, president of the Bodega Association, looked on.

Associated Press

questioned Thursday at the judge's bench, off-microphone and out of earshot of reporters, it was not known whether the man confirmed or denied either instance was connected to him.

Twelve jurors and six alternates must be seated to hear the trial. Merchan said Tuesday that opening statements could begin as soon as Monday.

The process of picking a jury is a critical phase of any criminal trial but especially so when the defendant is a former president and the presumptive Republican nominee. Prospective jurors have been grilled on their social media posts, personal lives and political views as the lawyers and judge search for biases that would prevent them from being impartial. Inside the court, there's broad acknowledgment of the futility in trying to find jurors without knowledge of Trump. A prosecutor this week said that lawyers were not looking for people who had been "living under a rock for the past eight years."

But Thursday's events laid bare the inherent challenges

of selecting a jury for such a landmark, high-publicity case. More than half the members of a group of 96 prospective jurors brought into the courtroom were dismissed Thursday, most after saying they doubted their ability to be fair and impartial.

After dismissing from the jury the nurse who had already been selected, Merchan ordered journalists in court not to report prospective jurors' answers to questions about their current and former employers.

"We just lost, probably, what probably would have been a very good juror for this case, and the first thing that she said was she was afraid and intimidated by the press, all the press, and everything that had happened," Merchan said after dismissing the juror.

Prosecutors had asked that the employer inquiries be axed from the jury questionnaire. Defense lawyer Todd Blanche responded that "depriving us of the information because of what the press is doing isn't the answer."

The district attorney's office

on Monday sought a \$3,000 fine for Trump for three Truth Social posts they said violated the order. Since then, prosecutors said he made seven additional posts that they believe violate the order. Several of the posts involved an article that referred to former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen as a "serial perjurer," and one from Wednesday repeated a claim by a Fox News host that liberal activists were lying to get on the jury, said prosecutor Christopher Conroy.

Trump lawyer Emil Bove said Cohen "has been attacking President Trump in public statements," and Trump was just replying.

The judge had already scheduled a hearing for next week on the prosecution's request for contempt sanctions over Trump's posts. The trial centers on a \$130,000 payment that Cohen made shortly before the 2016 election to porn actor Stormy Daniels to prevent her claims of a sexual encounter with Trump from becoming public in the race's final days. Prosecutors say Trump ob-

scured the true nature of the payments in internal records when his company reimbursed Cohen, who pleaded guilty to federal charges in 2018 and is expected to be a star witness for the prosecution.

Trump has denied having a sexual encounter with Daniels, and his lawyers argue that the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses.

Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. He could get up to four years in prison if convicted, though it's not clear that the judge would opt to put him behind bars. Trump would almost certainly appeal any conviction.

The hush money case is one of four criminal prosecutions involving Trump as he vies to reclaim the White House, but it's possible that it will be the sole case to reach trial before November's presidential election. Appeals and other legal wrangling have caused delays in cases charging Trump with plotting to overturn the 2020 election results and with illegally hoarding classified documents. □

Kennedy family makes 'crystal clear' its Biden endorsement in attempt to deflate RFK Jr.'s candidacy

By ZEKE MILLER, WILL WEISERT and CHRIS MEGERIAN
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — President Joe Biden scooped up endorsements from at least 15 members of the Kennedy political family during a campaign stop Thursday as he aims to undermine Donald Trump and marginalize the candidacy of independent Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Kerry Kennedy, a daughter of former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, niece of former President John F. Kennedy and sister of the current presidential candidate, delivered the endorsements in Philadelphia by calling Biden "my hero." "We want to make crystal clear our feelings that the best way forward for America is to reelect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris for four more years," she said.

She never directly mentioned her brother, but insisted "there are only two candidates with any chance of winning the presidency" this year, framing the campaign as a choice between Biden and Trump, with no room for a third party contender.

Biden, who keeps a bust of Robert F. Kennedy in the Oval Office, said the endorsements were "an incredible honor." He said Trump, the former president who is the presumptive Republican nominee, was a threat to America's democratic traditions and that "now it's time to keep going and not slow down because there's so much at stake."

The decision to highlight the Kennedy family's support more than six months from Election Day is an indication of how seriously Biden's team is taking a long shot candidate using his last name's lingering Democratic magic to siphon support from the incumbent.

Kennedy Jr. played down the endorsements, writing on social media that his family was "divided in our opinions but united in our love for each other."



President Joe Biden speaks during a campaign event in Philadelphia, Thursday, April 18, 2024, with members of the Kennedy family.

He said his campaign was about "healing America." Given Kennedy Jr.'s quixotic political positions and the expectation this year's campaign will be decided by thin margins, both Democrats and Republicans worry that he could be a spoiler. As a reminder of that potentially decisive role, officials in Michigan said Kennedy qualified for the state ballot on Thursday.

Biden used Thursday's event, which capped a three-day swing in Pennsylvania, to keep up the pressure on Trump.

"Donald Trump's vision is one of anger, hate, revenge and retribution," Biden said, adding, "I have a very different view of America, one of hope and optimism."

After the event, Biden thanked about three dozen supporters and volunteers who were gearing up to call voters or knock on doors for his campaign.

"What you're doing here is bigger than me, bigger than you, bigger than all of us combined. It's about what kind of country our kids are going to live in," Biden said.

He portrayed the election as less about keeping himself in office than keeping

Trump out, saying the race was important "not because I'm running" but because of "what happens if we lose this election."

The Kennedy family endorsements are hardly a surprise. Members of the prominent Democratic family have been vocal that they don't see eye to eye politically with Kennedy Jr., who started as a protest primary challenger to Biden in the Democratic Party and now is running as an independent. Biden last month hosted more than 30 members of Kennedy's extended family at the White House for St. Patrick's Day, when family members posed with the president in the Rose Garden and Oval Office.

Later, Biden and members of the Kennedy family were to meet with supporters at a campaign event, and some Kennedy were planning to make calls to voters and knock on doors on Biden's behalf.

Several notable members of the family were not endorsing, including Caroline Kennedy, the U.S. ambassador to Australia, and nonprofit leader Maria Shriver, which the Biden campaign said was due to their non-political professional roles. Shriver, however, has been

a conspicuous White House guest recently, attending the State of the Union and speaking at a women's history month reception last month.

Bernard Tamas of Valdosta State University, an expert on third parties, said it was unclear whether Kennedy Jr. would pull more votes from Democrats or Republicans.

"He is pro-science when it comes to the environment, but a conspiracy theorist when it comes to vaccines," Tamas said.

Kennedy Jr.'s lack of a clear political lane limits his potential impact on the election, Tamas said, but Democrats appear to be more concerned because his last name could lead some voters to believe that he is carrying on his family's political legacy.

Other than that, Tamas said, "I don't know what else he has to attract progressive voters."

Kennedy Jr. has spoken publicly in the past about disagreeing with his family on many issues, but maintains it can be done in "friendly" ways. After a super political action committee supporting his campaign produced a TV ad during the Super Bowl that relied heavily on imagery

from John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential run, Kennedy Jr. apologized to his relatives on the X social media platform, saying he was sorry if the spot "caused anyone in my family pain." The Democratic National Committee has hired a communications team to combat the appeal of third-party candidates, Kennedy Jr. first among them. The DNC also filed a recent Federal Election Commission complaint against Kennedy Jr.'s campaign, charging that it coordinated too closely with an affiliated super PAC to get his name on the presidential ballot in some states.

Kennedy Jr. is also viewed warily by the Trump campaign. While Trump has released a recent video saying, "If I were a Democrat, I'd vote for RFK Jr. every single time over Biden," he has sometimes criticized Kennedy Jr. as being more "radical left" than Biden.

On his way out of town, Biden made a swing by a Wawa, accompanied by Mayor Cherelle Parker, where he picked up some food and ordered a black and white milkshake. That served to cover Biden's bases on one front, given his stop Wednesday in Pittsburgh at a Sheetz, a rival convenience chain.

Biden's travels across Pennsylvania this week were an opportunity to reconnect with his roots, starting on Tuesday in Scranton, where he lived until age 10. He swung by his childhood home, a three-story colonial that his family rented, and reminisced about attending Mass at St. Paul's.

In Pittsburgh, he called for higher tariffs on steel and aluminum from China to protect U.S. industry from what he called unfair competition. But even that event involved some nostalgia, as Biden recalled an endorsement from the steelworkers when he was "a 29-year-old kid" from Delaware running for U.S. Senate. □

Justice Department ramps up efforts to reduce violent crime with gun intel center, carjacking forces

By **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is ramping up its efforts to reduce violent crime in the U.S., launching a specialized gun intelligence center in Chicago and expanding task forces to curb carjackings.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said there is “absolutely much more to do” to make communities safer, even as many places have experienced a downward trend in crime after a coronavirus pandemic-era spike.

“No level of violence is acceptable,” Monaco said during a trip to Chicago this week. “We are seeing progress, but we’re far from done. We have to double down on the strategies that work, by bringing federal resources to act as force multipliers.”

The initiatives are part of a broad effort by President Joe Biden’s administration to address violent crime an issue the Democratic president has featured in his reelection campaign to reach young voters concerned about gun violence. Republicans have seized on violence in some



Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco speaks as Attorney General Merrick Garland listens during a news conference at Department of Justice headquarters in Washington, March 21, 2024.
Associated Press

American cities, including the nation’s capital, to try to paint Democrats as weak on crime.

Last week, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives announced it had finalized a new rule requiring thousands more firearms dealers to run background checks on buyers at gun shows or other places outside brick-and-mortar stores. Gun rights groups are expected to mount legal challenges.

In Chicago, the gun crime intelligence center at the city’s ATF office brings together federal agents and state and local police as well as federal and local prosecutors to share and analyze firearm intelligence to better identify traffickers and the most prolific shooters, officials said.

It’s modeled after dozens of similar centers run by the ATF across the country. The Chicago center will house 65 agents, officers, analysts

and prosecutors.

“The goal is to catch more violent people, truly violent. And, second, to do a better job at seeing if we can prevent them from getting armed in the first place,” ATF Director Steve Dettelbach said in an interview. “The first days and hours after an incident are crucial to the investigation, and being able to have everybody together, looking at that data every single day and making decisions, is a

real game changer.”

Chicago is one of the nation’s gun violence hot-spots, even as police data shows shootings and killings declined there last year. The announcement comes days after a young girl was killed and 10 other people were wounded in a shooting police believe was gang-related on the city’s South Side.

“Every innocent life lost to gun violence is one too many,” Monaco said. “And every shooter evading justice is one too many.”

Recently released FBI data based on numbers sent from about 80% of U.S. law enforcement agencies shows murders overall dropped 13% and violent crime overall was down 6% in the last three months of 2023 compared with the same period the year before.

Final detailed data for 2023 is expected to be released in the fall.

Amid a scourge of carjackings nationwide, the Justice Department has also created task forces to combat the issue in seven more U.S. attorney’s offices, including the Eastern District of Texas, the Northern District of Alabama and the Northern District of California. □

Google fires 28 workers in aftermath of protests over big tech deal with Israeli government

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
AP Technology Writer

Google has fired 28 employees in the aftermath of

protests over technology that the internet company is supplying the Israeli government amid the Gaza war, further escalating tensions surrounding a hot-but-ton deal.

The firings confirmed by Google late Wednesday came a day after nine employees were arrested during sit-in protests at offices in New York and Sunnyvale, California, after the company called police.

The dissent roiling Google centers on “Project Nimbus,” a \$1.2 billion contract signed in 2021 that calls upon Google and Amazon to provide the Israeli gov-

ernment with cloud computing and artificial intelligence services.

The protests are being organized primarily by a group called No Tech For Apartheid. Google says Nimbus isn’t being deployed in weaponry or intelligence gathering.

In a statement, Google attributed the firing of the 28 employees to “completely unacceptable behavior” that prevented some workers from doing their jobs and created a threatening atmosphere. The Mountain View, California, company added it is still investigating what happened during

the protests, implying more workers could still be fired.

In a blog post, No Tech For Apartheid accused Google of lying about what happened inside its offices during what it described as “peaceful sit-in” that received overwhelming support from other workers who weren’t participating in the protest.

“This flagrant act of retaliation is a clear indication that Google values its \$1.2 billion contract with the genocidal Israeli government and military more than its own workers,” No Tech For Apartheid asserted. □



Two people ride past the Google sign outside the Google offices in Sunnyvale, Calif., on Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Associated Press

Security Council plans to vote on U.N. membership for Palestine. But the U.S. will block it

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) —

The U.N. Security Council is set to vote Thursday on a resolution that would allow the state of Palestine to join the United Nations as a full member, a step the United States opposes and will veto if necessary.

Malta, which holds the council presidency this month, announced that the vote will take place following a ministerial meeting on the Palestinians' bid to raise their status from a non-member observer state to full membership.

This is the second Palestinian attempt to become the 194th member of the United Nations, and it comes as the war in Gaza, now in its seventh month, has put the more than 75-year-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict at center stage.

But the Palestinian dream of international recognition as an independent state is certain to fail again.

The U.S. has "been very clear consistently that premature actions in New York even with the best intentions will not achieve statehood for the Palestinian people," deputy State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said.

Palestinian membership "needs to be the outcome



Robert Wood, United States' Ambassador to the United Nations, speaks during a Security Council meeting at United Nations headquarters, Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Associated Press

of the negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians," U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood said. It "is something that would flow from the result of those negotiations."

Anything that gets in the way "makes it more difficult to have those negotiations" and doesn't help move toward a two-state solution where Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace, which "we all want," Wood told reporters.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas first delivered

the Palestinian Authority's application for U.N. membership to then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2011. That initial bid failed because the Palestinians didn't get the required minimum support of nine of the Security Council's 15 members. Even if they did, the U.S. promised to veto any council resolution endorsing Palestinian membership and it will do so again Thursday if the Algerian-drafted resolution recommending membership gets at least nine "yes" votes.

Under the U.N. Charter, the Security Council must recommend membership to the 193-member General Assembly, where there are no vetoes, for a final vote. After the Palestinians' initial bid for full U.N. membership was rejected, they went to the General Assembly and by more than a two-thirds majority succeeded in having their status raised from a U.N. observer to a non-member observer state in November 2012. That opened the door for the Palestinian territories to join

U.N. and other international organizations, including the International Criminal Court.

The Palestinians revived their bid for U.N. membership in early April, backed by 140 countries that have recognized Palestine as an independent state.

Ziad Abu Amr, special representative of the Palestinian president, said adopting the resolution will grant the Palestinian people hope "for a decent life within an independent state." He said such "hope has dissipated over the past years because of the intransigence of the Israeli government that has rejected this solution publicly and blatantly, especially following the destructive war against the Gaza Strip."

He stressed to the Security Council that it won't be an alternative "for serious negotiations that are time-bound to implement the two-state solution" and U.N. resolutions, and to resolve pending issues between Palestinians and Israelis.

Amr asked the U.S. and other countries opposed to its U.N. membership how that could damage prospects for peace or harm international peace and security when they already recognize Israel and approved its U.N. membership. □

A magnitude 5.6 quake hits central Turkey, damaging some homes. No serious injuries are reported

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A moderately strong earthquake struck central Turkey on Thursday, the country's disaster management agency said, causing damage to some buildings. There were no immediate reports of any deaths or serious injuries.

The 5.6 magnitude quake hit in the town of Sulusaray, in Tokat province, some 450 kilometers (280 miles) east of the capital, Ankara, according to the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency.

It was felt in neighbor-

ing provinces, including in Yozgat, where a two-story building collapsed, the disaster agency said.

Several mudbrick and wooden homes and barns were damaged in the village of Bugdayli, near Sulusaray, according to Tokat's governor Numan Hatipoğlu.

Earlier in the day, Sulusaray was hit by two other earthquakes, measuring magnitude 4.7 and magnitude 4.1.

"The buildings, the lamp-posts, everything swayed like a cradle," said Gazi Ay,



A man looks at the damage caused by a moderately-strong earthquake that struck Tokat province, some 450 kilometers (280 miles) east of the capital, Ankara, Turkey, Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Associated Press

a resident of the town of Turhal, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Sulusaray.

"Everyone ran out of buildings," he told The Associated Press by telephone, adding that many of his neighbors were too afraid to return to their homes.

Turkey lies on active fault lines and earthquakes are frequent.

A devastating magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck parts of southern Turkey and neighboring Syria last year, killing more than 59,000 people. □

Armenian victims group asks International Criminal Court to investigate genocide claim

By **MOLLY QUELL** and **MIKE CORDER**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — A human rights organization representing ethnic Armenians submitted evidence to the International Criminal Court on Thursday, arguing that Azerbaijan is committing an ongoing genocide against them.

Azerbaijan's government didn't immediately comment on the accusations. The neighboring countries have been at odds for decades over the territory of Karabakh, and are already facing off in a separate legal case stemming from that conflict.

Lawyers for the California-based Center for Truth and Justice, or CFTJ, say there is sufficient evidence to open a formal investigation into Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and other top leaders for genocide. They have submitted a so-called Article 15 communication urging the court's chief prosecutor Karim Khan to look into alleged atrocities. Khan's office will now consider the evidence submit-



Ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh sit after arriving in Armenia's Goris in Syunik region, Armenia, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023.

ted and determine if the court will open an investigation, a decision expected to take months.

"My goal here is to get the highest bodies that protect human rights to take some action, not just mere words," Lala Abgaryan, whose sister Gayane was killed by Azerbaijani soldiers in 2022, told The Associated Press.

Her sister's body was badly mutilated and images of the abuse were spread online. Abgaryan says the pictures were so heinous that she suffered psychological damage after looking at them.

Long-standing tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan erupted in 2020 into a war over Karabakh that left more than 6,600 people

dead. The region is within Azerbaijan but had been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces since the end of a separatist war in 1994.

Last year, following a lightning military campaign, Azerbaijan retook the disputed territory. After Azerbaijan regained full control of Karabakh, which had a population of around

120,000, more than 100,000 of the region's ethnic Armenians fled, although Azerbaijan said they were welcome to stay and promised their human rights would be ensured.

Prior to Azerbaijan's offensive, Armenia and former International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo accused Azerbaijan of committing genocide by creating conditions aimed at destroying Karabakh Armenians as a group.

A group of around 30 people gathered in the rain in front of The Hague-based court Thursday to hand over more than 100 pages of documents.

The rights organization said it has submitted a dossier of evidence containing the testimony of more than 500 victims and witnesses.

"These atrocities are captured on social media, by Azerbaijani soldiers themselves, where you hear them laughing, making comments, and taking the dead bodies that they've just slaughtered and beheaded," CFTJ leader Gasia Apkaria told the AP. □

Associated Press

Zimbabwe frees prisoners, including those sentenced to death, in an independence day amnesty

By **FARAI MUTSAKA**

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)

— Zimbabwe President Em-

merson Mnangagwa granted clemency to more than 4,000 prisoners, including some who were on death

row, in an independence day amnesty on Thursday. Zimbabwe marked 44 years of independence from white minority rule, which ended in 1980 after a bloody bush war. The country's name was changed from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe.

The presidential amnesty, the second in less than a year, benefits female, older and juvenile inmates, the terminally ill and some who were originally sentenced to death.

Those once on death row but who had their sentences commuted to life terms in previous clemency orders or through court appeals are to be freed provided they have been in

prison for at least 20 years, according to the clemency order, which was announced Wednesday and due to take effect on Thursday.

All female prisoners who had served at least a third of their sentence by independence day are being freed, as are juvenile inmates who have served the same period.

Prisoners age 60 and older who have served one tenth of their sentences will also be released.

Mnangagwa also pardoned the blind and others with disabilities who have served a third of their sentence.

The prisoners are being released in batches across

the country.

However, those jailed for "specified" offences that include sexual offences, robbery, public violence, unlawful possession of firearms, human trafficking and theft or vandalism of electricity and telecommunications infrastructure won't benefit from the amnesty.

All death row prisoners who have been in jail for at least 10 years had their sentences commuted to life in prison under the amnesty.

Zimbabwe has more than 60 inmates on death row. It wasn't immediately clear how many of those had their sentences commuted to life under the amnesty. □



Prisoners gather inside Chikurubi Maximum prison before their release on the outskirts of the capital Harare, Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Associated Press

Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called *Did you know about...?*, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is *placa*. Cents are called *cen* (pronounced: *seng*), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called *Dos placa*; 10-cent coins were called *debchi*; 25-cent coins were called *diez placa* and the 50-cent coin was once called *Yotin* (pronounced: *jo-teen*). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called *placa too*. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban



artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.



Current design and symbolism 10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a *Turtuga blanco* (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the *Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins*, a coral motif, and the symbols of *Cas Floria* (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called *Shoshoro*. The birds *Trupiaal*, *Shoco*, rock drawings, and the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also

a *Purun di ceramica* (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the *Cododo* (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), *Cangreu di tera* (land crab), *Willem III Tower*, and again the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called *Banana di rif*. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the *Yuwana* (Iguana), *Aloe*, *Toteki* (lizard), the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the *Baile di cinta* (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the *Dornasol* and the *Warawara*—both local birds, along with the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, the *Tuna cactus* plant, and the *Caha di orgel* (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word "florin" supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

Source: *Placa, placa, placa* by the National Library of Aruba

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Snakes you may encounter on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—If you have ever or will ever go off-roading on the island, you may encounter three types of snakes that are dominant on the island. The Cascabel, Santanero and Boa differ from each other in a couple ways, and local perspective on each one may help you understand what you need to do if you ever were to encounter one during your touring session on the island.

sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. In fact, it's the only venomous snake native to the island. It is best to leave this snake alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it, as it could not only be dangerous, but this snake is also endemic to the island, and its preservation has become a legal mandate for all residents and visitors.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing

Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattlesnakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most

of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol. Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.

Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is a small fella, typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. Native as well to the is-

land, this snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans, but can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not harm this species.

Boa (*Boa constrictor*)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. New-born Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous but are what is called constrictor snakes; they kill by wrapping themselves around a prey and suffocating them. The

most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly is white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly.

Boas are a non-native species and are invasive to the island, risking the population of native lizards and birds. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. If you ever encounter a Boa, please do not approach it. Instead, please call the Arikok National Park, as they are experienced in handling Boas. □

Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!



(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These "coconut stands" can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts! Perfect during family outings around the island,

these stands can be found in the following locations:

- Near the red Anchor in San Nicolas
- On the Linear Park in Oranjestad (in front of airport runway)
- At the California Light House hill
- Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin
- Bushiri Beach (Near the Ling & Song Supermarket) □



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April 23: Experience FPNA full moon hike!

(Oranjestad)—Every month when the moon is full, the Aruba National Park Foundation hosts its monthly full moon hike for both members and non-members. For this month, they are offering yet another chance to join in on the fun, and take advantage of seeing the beautiful Aruban night sky!

For this month's full moon event, the hike will start at the Arikok Visitor Center, where participants will be led through Miralamar and finish up the stairs to the highest hill on the island, Jamanota. With the moon illuminating your way, you can have a chance to see a few constellations and bright stars shining in the night sky, while also enjoying the cool night breeze and the

beautiful sound of waves crashing on the rocky shore lines. Participants are expected to meet at the Visitor Center at 5:30 pm this Monday, March 25th. The journey will cover 4.1 kilometers (2.6 miles) and is estimated to end around 8pm. Non-resident participants can enjoy this night with an entree fee of 30 dollars.

If you wish to participate, you can sign up for the event through this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/UPTwu4ar0k>, or contact the FNPA at (297) 585 1234 or e-mail, info@arubanationalpark.org for more info or questions. Spots are limited, so don't wait! □

Picture credit: FPNA on Facebook.



Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!



The Baby Natural Bridge

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was

also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close.

This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



Current state of the Natural Bridge



The Natural Bridge pre-collapse

Episode CXVIII-119 - Native Superstition

Locals have been influenced by native traditions such as fears that young children, especially newborns be struck by illness, high fever and died. This particular superstition claims that victims were exposed to individuals of "strong eyes" that have the power to look and cause them harm.

People since the beginning of time knew that their children and families were the most precious gift they could receive and that this traditional folk believe has persisted through the years, even though we all call ourselves modern Christians, Muslims, Hindus or Jews. This fear that linger somewhere in our Aruban subconscious dates back generations and that bad luck can strike, unlocking dark power of disaster that affects one's life. For this affliction the locals has their own amulets or contras in the form of a black fist or small red and black seeds hanging from a fine golden bracelet dangling around arms and necks of our native Aruban newborns.

In the picture you can see one abstract representa-

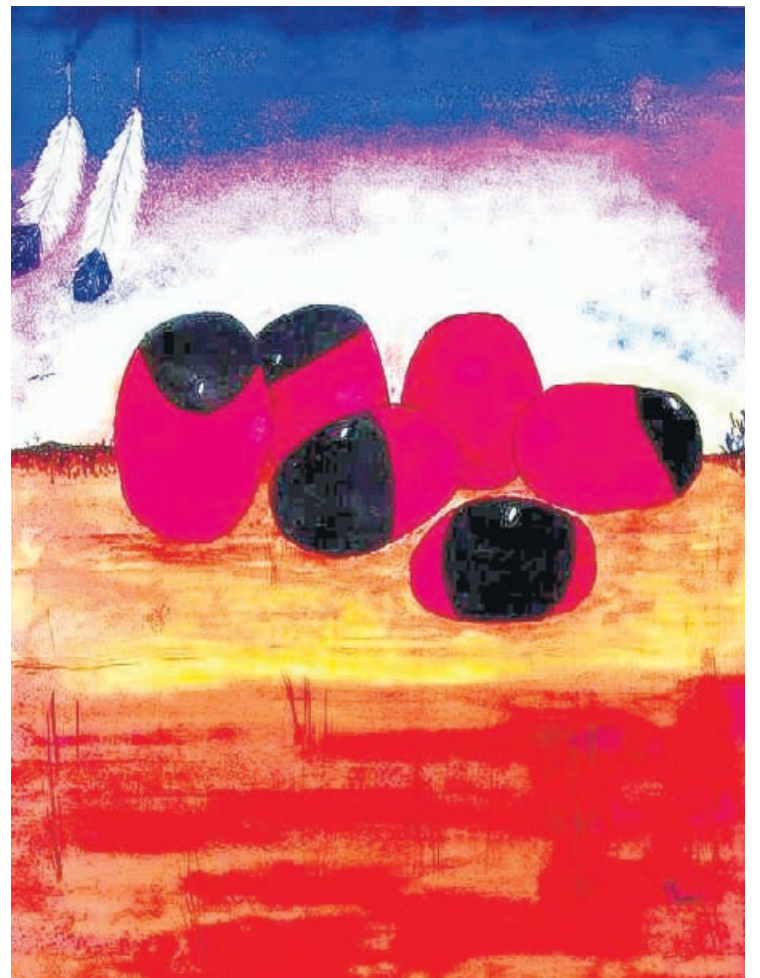


tion of "Bonchi Hojada" evil eye seeds or beans in a painting at Etnia Nativa. These beans we call Bonchi Hojada, are from a plant known as Abrus precatorius, a poisonous plant which contains one of the most lethal toxins, Abrin, a toxalbumin that inhibits protein synthesis causing cell death. In some countries these seeds are crushed and taken orally for suicidal purpose, while there is no antidote for this poisoning as yet.

Abrus precatorius is a vine native to India and other

tropical and subtropical areas of the world and found growing wild on the island. Since introduction to Florida and the Caribbean, it is now commonly found throughout these areas and in the southern United States. It is known by a variety of names, including jequirity bean, rosary pea, and prayer bead, crab's eye, and love bean. The vine has pods with oval seeds and a hard glossy shell. The seeds vary in color, from red, black, orange or white with black and white centers). While all parts of the plant are toxic, the highest concentrations are found in the seeds. Due to their appearance, the seeds are often used for jewelry, beadwork and ornaments.

If you believe your seeds are from Abrus Precatorius, wrap, label and warn, poisonous do not to touch or eat. Don't leave them lying around to sort another day. The Rosary pea is very aesthetically pleasing, and for this reason it is made into jewelry by various cultures. Unfortunately some jewelry makers have died by pricking their fingers during this process. Yup, the rosary pea is probably the



world's most toxic seed. While intact, the seeds are mostly harmless (if I can use that word), but once the outer coating is scratched or the seed is crushed, as little as 0.1-1 µg/kg can kill a human.

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we

highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianaativa03@gmail.com or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels. □



Article by: Etnia Nativa

Whatsapp us +297 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience

Etnia Nativa is close to the high rise hotels



Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cucularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting.

These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color. The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi

(parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.



The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their

short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

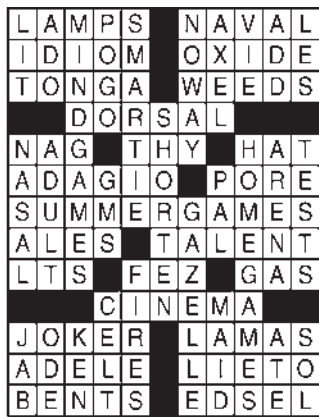
These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/> □



CROSSWORD

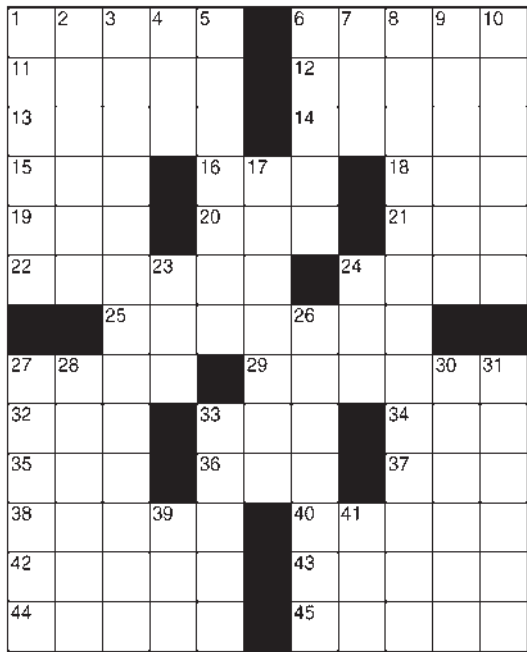
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 37 Some amount of
 - 1 Detest
 - 6 "The Merry Widow" composer
 - 11 Baseball's Pee Wee
 - 12 Give a speech
 - 13 School group
 - 14 Writer Carr
 - 15 Vacuum's lack
 - 16 Screening org.
 - 18 Seine water
 - 19 Badminton need
 - 20 Gusher flow
 - 21 Demand
 - 22 On the beach
 - 24 Pants part
 - 25 Warned
 - 27 Orange cover
 - 29 Civil libertarian's concern
 - 32 Wrap up
 - 33 — Fernando
 - 34 Slippery one
 - 35 Derisive cry
 - 36 "Gangnam Style" singer
- DOWN**
- 1 Secret stuff
 - 2 Contradicts
 - 3 Family life, figuratively
 - 4 CIA's forerunner
 - 5 Make good as new
 - 6 From the area
 - 7 Pitcher's stat
 - 8 In fine fettle
 - 9 Comfortable
 - 10 Chastise
 - 17 Western peaks
 - 23 Outdated
 - 24 Tapped item
 - 26 Toddler
 - 27 Luke and Leia, e.g.
 - 28 Needing change
 - 30 Past and future
 - 31 Most crafty
 - 33 Forgo frugality
 - 39 Ruby of films
 - 41 Attention



Yesterday's answer

- 6 From the area
- 7 Pitcher's stat
- 8 In fine fettle
- 9 Comfortable
- 10 Chastise
- 17 Western peaks
- 23 Outdated
- 24 Tapped item
- 26 Toddler
- 27 Luke and Leia, e.g.
- 28 Needing change
- 30 Past and future
- 31 Most crafty
- 33 Forgo frugality
- 39 Ruby of films
- 41 Attention



4-19

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-19

CRYPTOQUOTE

JHC YGF CJI MJDF OGFH YGF
UAER YB UFDJAH YAWGY AH J
LXC OJE DBUF SJAHQXK YGJH
YGF UAER AY YB BR YB

LKBEEBD. — JHJAE HAH

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: OUR WISDOM COMES FROM OUR EXPERIENCE, AND OUR EXPERIENCE COMES FROM OUR FOOLISHNESS. — SACHA GUITRY

Cruise Schedule

TUE	09	SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
WED	10	CARNIVAL MAGIC	07.00	15.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN PRIMA	10.00	20.00	C	1
		MARELLA VOYAGER	08.00	20.00	I	1
THU	11	MSC DIVINA	07.00	14.00	B	1
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
FRI	12	CARNIVAL PRIDE	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	10.00	20.00	I	1
SAT	13	NORWEGIAN JADE	07.00	20.00	C	1
TUE	16	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	17	ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
SAT	20	NORWEGIAN PRIMA	10.00	19.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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'There is no time to waste': EU leaders want to boost competitiveness to close gap with U.S. and China

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union leaders on Thursday debated a new "European Competitiveness Deal" aimed at helping the 27-nation bloc close the economic production gap with Chinese and American rivals amid fears the region's industries will otherwise be left behind for good.

In a volatile geopolitical landscape redefined by the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and increasing tensions in the Middle East that create new economic challenges, EU leaders believe there is an urgent need for action.

China, the U.S. and the European Union are the three largest economies in the world, but the EU's share has diminished over the past 30 years. Europe is now feeling pressure amid U.S. and Chinese efforts to support investment in domestic production through subsidies and tax breaks, particularly in renewable energy and green technology.

Before the summit in Brussels, the former president of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, said the EU did not pay enough attention to "external competitiveness as a serious policy question" and insisted Europe's biggest economic rivals "are no longer playing by the rules."

"In the face of a new geopolitical reality and increasingly complex challenges, the European Union is committed to acting decisively to ensure its long-term competitiveness, prosperity and leadership on the global stage and to strengthen its strategic sovereignty," leaders agreed as their summit in Brussels concluded.

Leaders heard a proposal for an EU-wide effort to subsidize industrial companies in response to the Biden administration's support for investment in envi-



From left, Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, European Council President Charles Michel, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, author of the High-Level Report on the future of the Single Market Enrico Letta and Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis speak during a round table meeting at an EU summit in Brussels, Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Associated Press

ronmentally friendly technology through the Inflation Reduction Act, and to China's subsidies for electric cars and solar panels. The proposals, contained in a report from former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta, are in response to widespread concern that U.S. subsidies, which favor domestic production in the U.S., are drawing investment from Europe and

threatening the loss of industrial jobs on the continent.

"Competitiveness means prosperity for our citizens," Letta said.

"We're in danger of falling out of touch. There is no time to waste. The gap between the European Union and the U.S. in terms of economic performances is becoming bigger and bigger." □

How to reach us!

Downtown



Editor
 Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
 Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
 Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
 Acc. #23951903
 RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
 Richard Brooks
 Angenette Figuerero

Sales

Mark Gomes
 Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
 T: 582-7800
 E: news@arubatoday.com
 W: www.arubatoday.com
 @arubatoday

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Allman Brothers Band co-founder and legendary guitarist Dickey Betts dies at 80

By **STEVEN WINE** and **RUSS BYNUM**

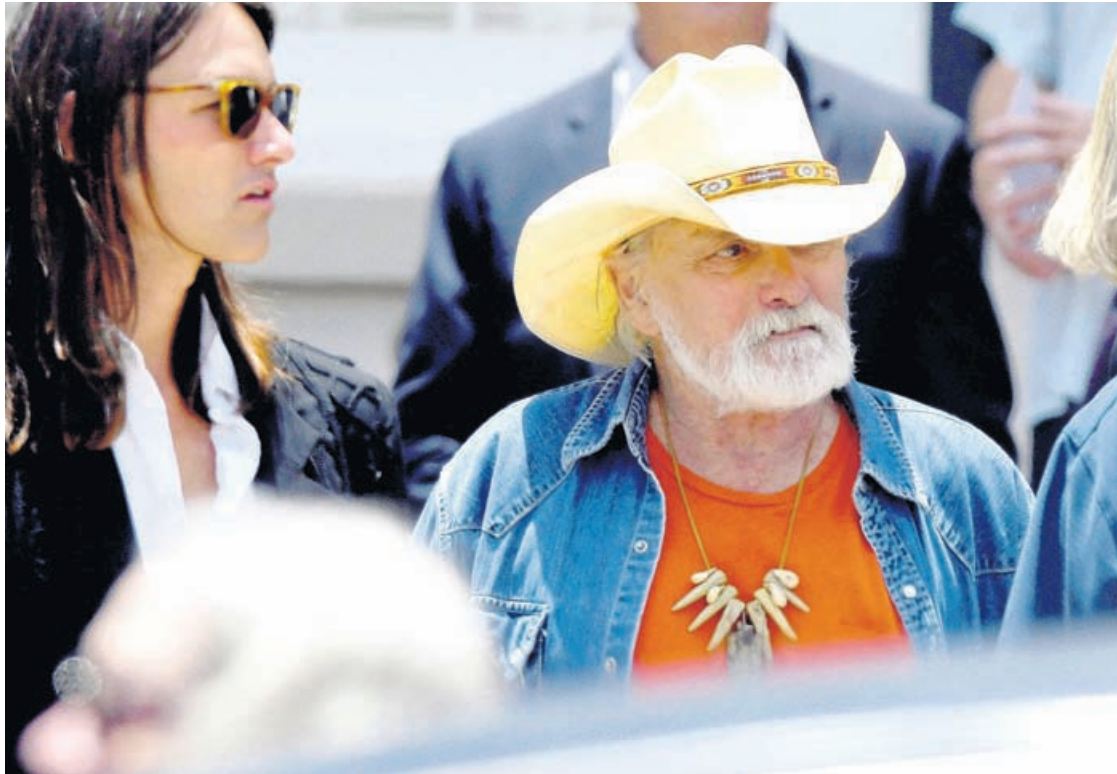
Associated Press

Guitar legend Dickey Betts, who co-founded the Allman Brothers Band and wrote their biggest hit, "Ramblin' Man," has died. He was 80.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Famer died at his home in Osprey, Florida, David Spero, Betts' manager of 20 years, confirmed. Betts had been battling cancer for more than a year and had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Spero said.

"He was surrounded by his whole family and he passed peacefully. They didn't think he was in any pain," Spero said by phone. Betts shared lead guitar duties with Duane Allman in the original Allman Brothers Band to help give the group its distinctive sound and create a new genre: Southern rock. Acts including Lynyrd Skynyrd, Kid Rock, Phish and Jason Isbell among many others were influenced by the Allmans' music, which combined the blues, country, R&B and jazz with '60s rock.

"My first concert was Dickey Betts at Coleman's in Rome, New York in 1983," blues-rock guitarist Joe Bonamassa said in an Instagram post Thursday, crediting Betts with inspiring his favorite electric guitar



Dickey Betts, a founding member of the Allman Brothers Band, exits the funeral of Gregg Allman at Snow's Memorial Chapel, June 3, 2017, in Macon, Ga

Associated Press

model. "Blew my mind and made me want a Les Paul." Other tributes came from members of the Allman Brothers Band's extended family. Guitarist Derek Trucks and his wife and bandmate, Susan Tedeschi, posted on their joint Instagram account that Betts was "one of best to ever do it." "Rest easy Dickey," the post said.

Trucks joined the Allman Brothers Band in 1999. His uncle Butch Trucks was one of the band's two founding drummers.

Bassist Berry Duane Oakley, son of Allman Brothers founding bassist Berry Oakley, honored his "Uncle Dickey" on Facebook, saying: "If not for him, I don't think I would be a touring musician.

The cat in the hat will never be forgotten, and will always be honored not only for the wonderful life he lived, but the wonderful music he has left behind for all of us to share and remember."

Founded in 1969, the Allmans were a pioneering

jam band, trampling the traditional notion of three-minute pop songs by performing lengthy compositions in concert and on record. The band was also notable as a biracial group from the Deep South.

Duane Allman died in a motorcycle accident in 1971, and Oakley was killed in a motorcycle crash a year later. That left Betts and Allman's younger brother Gregg as the band's leaders, but they frequently clashed, and substance abuse caused further dys-

function. The band broke up at least twice before reforming, and has had more than a dozen lineups.

The Allman Brothers Band was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 and earned a Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award in 2012. Betts left the group for good in 2000, and also played solo and with his own band Great Southern, which included his son, guitarist Duane Betts.

Forrest Richard Betts was born Dec. 12, 1943, and was raised in the Bradenton, Florida, area, near the highway 41 he sang about in "Ramblin' Man." His family had lived in the area since the mid-19th century. Betts grew up listening to country, bluegrass and Western swing, and played the ukulele and banjo before focusing on the electric guitar because it impressed girls. At 16 he left home for his first road trip, joining the circus to play in a band.

He returned home, and with bassist Oakley joined a group that became the Jacksonville, Florida-based band Second Coming. One night in 1969 Betts and Oakley jammed with Duane Allman, already a successful session musician, and his younger brother, and together they formed the Allman Brothers Band. □

Nancy Pelosi book, 'The Art of Power,' will reflect on her career in public life



Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., talks to The Associated Press on April 19, 2023, at the Capitol in Washington.

Associated Press

By **HILLEL ITALIE**
AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has completed a book about her years in public life, from legislation she helped enact to such traumatizing moments as the Jan. 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol and the assault at her San Francisco home that left her husband with a fractured skull.

Simon & Schuster announced Thursday that Pelosi's "The Art of Power" will be released Aug. 6.

"People always ask me how I did what I did in the House," Pelosi, the first woman to become speaker, said in a statement. "In 'The Art of Power,' I reveal how and more importantly, why." Pelosi, 84, was first elected to the House in 1987, rose to minority leader in 2003 and to speaker four years later, when the Democrats became

the majority party. She served as speaker from 2007-2011, and again from 2019-2023, and was widely credited with helping to mobilize support for and pass such landmark bills as the Affordable Care Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

She stepped away from any leadership positions after Republicans retook the majority in the 2022 elections, but she continues to represent California's 11th district.

According to Simon & Schuster, Pelosi also will offer a "personal account" of Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters rampaged through the Capitol as Congress voted to certify Joe Biden's victory over Trump. She also recounts the night in 2022 when an intruder broke into the Pelosi home and assaulted her husband, Paul Pelosi, with a hammer. (Nancy Pelosi was in Washington at the time). □

Fernando Tatis Jr. has 50 custom cleats planned this year, including odes to Gwynn, Curry and more

By **BERNIE WILSON**

AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Fernando Tatis Jr. had Tony Gwynn with him when he rounded the bases after a dramatic, go-ahead home run against the Chicago Cubs last week.

The San Diego Padres star stutter-stepped into third base with his right cleat, designed with the look of the team's home white pinstriped jerseys from 1998, when Gwynn led the Padres to their most recent World Series.

Tatis' left cleat was in the brown and yellow color scheme from the 1980s. Both cleats had "Mr. Padre" on the back to honor the late Hall of Famer.

Perhaps divine providence led Tatis to unveil those custom cleats on the 20th anniversary of the first Padres game at Petco Park, where a statue of Gwynn stands beyond the center field fence. Or maybe it's just the swagger and flair that sets Tatis apart from most other ballplayers.

"Definitely the shoes," Tatis said after helping turn an 8-0 deficit into a 9-8 win. "The power came from above. Always grateful. Definitely a little bit inspired today. Just happy I was wearing those shoes today." He's hoping to pull more inspiration from the ground up this season. Tatis plans to unveil 50 pairs of custom cleats in conjunc-



San Diego Padres' Fernando Tatis Jr. wears cleats for Jackie Robinson Day during the sixth inning of a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers Monday, April 15, 2024, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

tion with his branding company, Xample, and Los Angeles-based Shoe Surgeon. The cleats will honor people, events and whatever strikes the 25-year-old Tatis' fancy.

"It's a crazy idea," Tatis said. "We're definitely having fun with them."

Tatis previously had a shoe deal with Adidas, but the company ended that days after MLB suspended him for 80 games for testing performance-enhancing drugs in August 2022. Being a shoe free agent has allowed the dreadlocked Dominican to be creative and use different brands, although he

favors Jordan 1 Mid cleats by Nike. "I think that really made him more expressive in terms of really showing the world who he is," Xample founder and CEO Nick Drbal said. "Never judge a book by its cover or else we'll just write our own book." In 2019, MLB began allowing more colorful cleats. Tatis, along with Bryce Harper and a handful of others, have been at the vanguard of creativity. Tatis unveiled his first custom pair during a two-game series against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Seoul, South Korea.

For the home opener, he honored late Padres own-

er Peter Seidler with cleats that included images of Seidler, who died Nov. 14 at age 63, and palm trees. Seidler stood by Tatis during the PED suspension and was at the star's first game back. Tatis put Seidler's quote, "I believe in him," on the back of the cleats. Tatis plans to give them to Seidler's family.

The next night, Tatis wore "Tatis & Co." shoes in stylish Tiffany Blue to match the Padres' colorful City Connect uniforms. He homered twice. A pair called "Platino" honored his 2023 NL Platinum Glove Award and featured the silhouette of Tatis leaping to make a

home run-robbing catch last season.

On Military Appreciation Day, he wore cleats made from the camouflage uniform Army veteran Mark Bartlett wore while deployed in Afghanistan and a uniform worn by Navy veteran Jared Kenney, including their name tags. That project came about after Tatis asked fans on Instagram what they'd like to see. A longtime Padres fan, Bartlett, 41, said he was "speechless and emotional" when he found out at game time that Tatis was wearing the cleats. "I was celebrating Easter with my family and I had to go in the garage to let it out. Started bawling when I first set eyes on them."

Raised in a military family, Bartlett applauded Tatis for supporting San Diego's military community. He said his father, a 24-year Navy veteran who died during the pandemic, "would be so proud to see his family name on one of his favorite player's cleats."

Tatis opened a series in San Francisco by wearing a pair of Stephen Curry's Under Armour basketball shoes that had been modified into cleats.

The Golden State Warriors superstar personalized them with his favorite Bible verse, "I can do all things." Curry said he and Tatis connected through a mutual friend. □

Swiatek beats Mertens and will face Raducanu in Stuttgart quarterfinals

STUTTGART, Germany (AP)

— Top-seeded Iga Swiatek beat Elise Mertens 6-3, 6-4 to advance to the Porsche Grand Prix quarterfinals on Thursday.

The top-ranked Swiatek will face next Emma Raducanu, who knocked out Linda Noskova 6-0, 7-5.

Earlier, fourth-seeded Elena Rybakina battled her way into the quarterfinals in a roller coaster 7-6 (3), 1-6, 6-4 victory over Veronika

Kudermetova.

Rybakina managed to stave off three break points toward the end of the opening set and then took control of the tiebreaker. But her errors mounted in the second set as Kudermetova began to dominate.

Rybakina regained control in the decider and surged to 4-1 before more errors allowed Kudermetova to level. But the Kazakh player

rallied again to take a tight service hold and close out the match.

She will face Jasmine Paolini after the Italian upset seventh-seeded Ons Jabeur 7-6 (8), 6-4.

Sixth-seeded Markéta Vondroušová also reached the quarterfinals after seeing off Anastasia Potapova 7-6 (5), 6-1. The Wimbledon champion has lined up second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka.

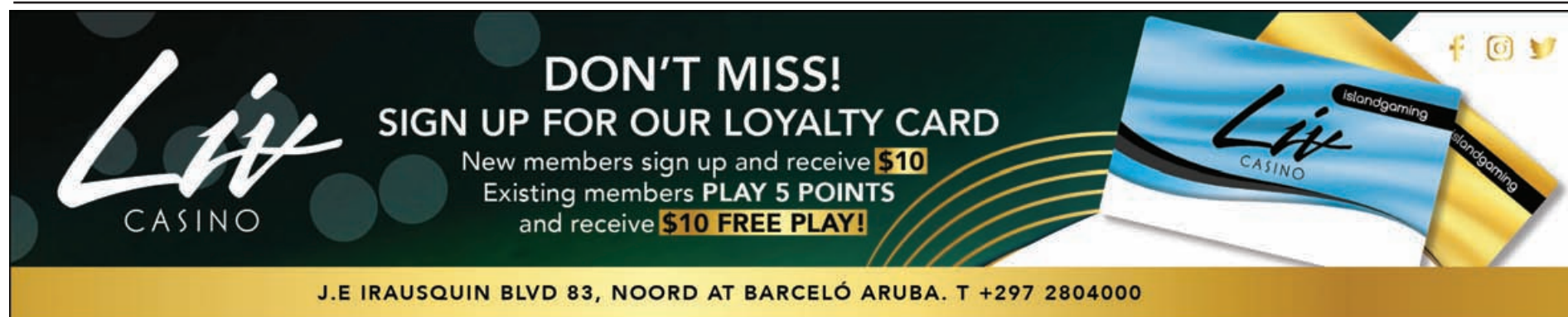


Poland's Iga Swiatek plays a return to Belgium's Elise Mertens during the women's singles round of 16 tennis match at the WTA Tour in Stuttgart, Germany, Thursday April 18, 2024.

Associated Press

Eight of the top 10 ranked women are at the tournament, the main event in the

first week of clay tournaments on the WTA Tour. □



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Coyotes officially leaving Arizona for Salt Lake City following approval of sale to Utah Jazz owners

By **JOHN MARSHALL**
AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — The Arizona Coyotes are officially headed to Salt Lake City. The NHL Board of Governors voted unanimously Thursday to approve a \$1.2 billion sale from Alex Meruelo to Utah Jazz owners Ryan and Ashley Smith, clearing the way for the franchise's move to Utah next season. The deal includes a provision for Arizona to get an expansion team if a new arena is built within the next five years. The deal will be facilitated through the NHL, with \$200 million going to league owners as a relocation fee.

"We expressed our interest publicly with the NHL," Ryan Smith told The Associated Press. "It's probably been two years where we've said, 'Hey, look, we really believe Utah can be an incredible hockey town.' You look at all the demographics, we were just talking about the Olympics and you think about the Olym-



Arizona Coyotes fans celebrate an empty-net goal by Sean Durzi against the Edmonton Oilers during the third period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, April 17, 2024, in Tempe, Ariz. The Coyotes won 5-2.

pics coming back. It all kind of made sense."

Smith will take over the franchise's hockey operations and Meruelo will maintain his business operations in Arizona in an effort to secure and develop a tract of land for a new arena in

north Phoenix.

Meruelo also retains ownership of the Tucson Roadrunners, the franchise's AHL affiliate, and hopes to move them to Mullett Arena, the Coyotes' temporary home shared with Arizona State University the past two sea-

sons. He plans to pay back the \$1 billion once an expansion team is approved. "The NHL's belief in Arizona has never wavered," NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said in a statement. "We thank Alex Meruelo for his commitment to the

Associated Press

franchise and Arizona, and we fully support his ongoing efforts to secure a new home in the desert for the Coyotes. We also want to acknowledge the loyal hockey fans of Arizona, who have supported their team with dedication for nearly three decades while growing the game."

Meruelo will retain the Coyotes' name, logo and trademark, so Smith's group will have to rename the team. The team will play at Delta Center, home of the Jazz, until a new arena can be built.

"We'll start with Utah on the jersey and we'll figure out the logo and everything else, and what it is that we are, but that's a one-way door," Smith said. "You've got to do it once. And with this timeline, I think both the league feels better and we feel better to just run the process and then we'll drop it when we drop it." The sale ends the Coyotes' long-running bid to find a permanent home. □

Defending champion Lilia Vu withdraws from Chevron Championship with back injury before 1st round



United States' Lilia Vu plays her tee shot on the 4th hole during her single match at the Solheim Cup golf tournament in Finca Cortesin, near Casares, southern Spain, Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023.

Associated Press

THE WOODLANDS, Texas (AP) — Defending champion and world No. 2 Lilia Vu withdrew from the Chevron Championship on Thursday before the first round because of a back injury.

She issued a statement on Instagram saying she had "severe discomfort" in her back during warmups Thursday to force her withdrawal.

"I have been dealing with a back injury for a while now," she said in the statement. "Some days are better than others, and today was unfortunately not a good day. During my normal warmup routine, I had severe discomfort in my back and I felt that I could not compete up to my standards and made the decision to withdraw from the tournament ahead of my tee time."

She added that she was returning home immediately to see her doctors and determine the next steps.

The back issue forced her to withdraw from a previous event this season.

The 26-year-old American was asked about her health leading up to the tournament on Tuesday.

"It's been a rough couple months battling with my injury," she said. "It's been a little scary."

I've definitely cried a lot on the range sometimes because my back just couldn't hold up."

She added that she felt "95% there."

Vu was the LPGA player of the year last season. She won the Women's British Open after her Chevron victory. □