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Ukraine uses long-range missiles secretly provided by US to hit Russian-held areas, officials say



In this image provided by the U.S. Army U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jimmy Lerma, crew chief for Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, 17th Field Artillery Brigade, adjusts the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) for loading on to the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) at Williamson Airfield in Queensland, Australia, on July 26, 2023.

Associated Press
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Ukraine uses long-range missiles secretly provided by US to hit Russian-held areas, officials say

From Front

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ukraine for the first time has begun using long-range ballistic missiles provided secretly by the United States, bombing a Russian military airfield in Crimea last week and Russian forces in another occupied area overnight, American officials said Wednesday. Long sought by Ukrainian leaders, the new missiles give Ukraine nearly double the striking distance — up to 300 kilometers (190 miles) — that it had with the mid-range version of the weapon that it received from the U.S. last October.

"We've already sent some, we will send more now that we have additional authority and money," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. The additional ATACMS were included in a new military aid package signed by President Joe Biden on Wednesday.

Biden approved delivery of the long-range Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, in February, and then in March the U.S. included a "significant" number of them in a \$300 million aid package announced, officials said.

U.S. officials would not provide the exact number of missiles given last month or in the latest aid package, which totals about \$1 billion.

Ukraine has been forced to ration its weapons and is facing increasing Russian attacks. Ukraine had been begging for the long-range system because the missiles provide a critical ability to strike Russian targets that are farther away, allowing Ukrainian forces to stay safely out of range.

Information about the delivery was kept so quiet that lawmakers and others in recent days have been demanding that the U.S. send the weapons — not knowing they were already in Ukraine.



In this image provided by the U.S. Army, soldiers, from the 3rd Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment of the 18th Field Artillery Brigade out of Fort Bragg N.C., conduct live fire testing at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., on Dec. 14, 2021, of early versions of the Army Tactical Missile System.

Associated Press

For months, the U.S. resisted sending Ukraine the long-range missiles out of concern that Kyiv could use them to hit deep into Russian territory, enraging Moscow and escalating the conflict. That was a key reason the administration sent the mid-range version, with a range of about 160 kilometers (roughly 100 miles), in October instead. Adm. Christopher Grady, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Wednesday that the White House and military planners looked carefully at the risks of providing long-range fires to Ukraine and determined that the time was right to provide them now. He told The Associated Press in an interview that long-range weapons will help Ukraine take out Russian logistics nodes and troop concentrations that are not on the front lines. Grady declined to identify what specific weapons were being provided but said they will be "very disruptive if used properly, and I'm confident they will be."

Like many of the other sophisticated weapons systems provided to Ukraine, the administration weighed

whether their use would risk further escalating the conflict. The administration is continuing to make clear that the weapons cannot be used to hit targets inside Russia. At the State Department, spokesman Vedant Patel said Wednesday that Biden directed his national security team to send the ATACMS specifying that they be used inside Ukrainian sovereign territory.

"I think the time is right, and the boss (Biden) made the decision the time is right to provide these based on where the fight is right now," Grady said Wednesday. "I think it was a very well considered decision, and we really wrung it out — but again, any time you introduce a new system, any change — into a battlefield, you have to think through the escalatory nature of it."

Ukrainian officials haven't publicly acknowledged the receipt or use of long-range ATACMS. But in thanking Congress for passing the new aid bill Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted on the social platform X that "Ukraine's long-range capabilities, artillery and air defense are extremely im-

portant tools for the quick restoration of a just peace." One U.S. official said the Biden administration warned Russia last year that if Moscow acquired and used long-range ballistic missiles in Ukraine, Washington would provide the same capability to Kyiv. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about internal discussions. Russia got some of those weapons from North Korea and has used them on the battlefield in Ukraine, said the official, prompting the Biden administration to greenlight the new long-range missiles.

The U.S. had refused to confirm that the long-range missiles were given to Ukraine until they were actually used on the battlefield and Kyiv leaders approved the public release. One official said the weapons were used early last week to strike the airfield in Dzhankoi, a city in Crimea, a peninsula that Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014. They were used again overnight east of the occupied city of Berdyansk.

Videos on social media last week showed the explosions at the military airfield, but officials at the time

would not confirm it was the ATACMS.

"These strikes proved — once again — that Ukraine can notch battlefield victories when given the right tools," said Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee who has long pressed the administration to send the long-range weapons.

Ukraine's first use of the weapon came as political gridlock in Congress had delayed approval of a \$95 billion foreign aid package for months, including funding for Ukraine, Israel and other allies. Facing acute shortages of artillery and air defense systems, Ukraine has been rationing its munitions as U.S. funding was delayed.

With the war now in its third year, Russia used the delay in U.S. weapons deliveries and its own edge in firepower and personnel to step up attacks across eastern Ukraine. It has increasingly used satellite-guided gliding bombs — dropped from planes from a safe distance — to pummel Ukrainian forces beset by a shortage of troops and ammunition.

The mid-range missiles provided last year, and some of the long-range ones sent more recently, carry cluster munitions that open in the air when fired, releasing hundreds of bomblets rather than a single warhead. Others sent recently have a single warhead.

One critical factor in the February decision to send the weapons was the U.S. Army's ability to begin replacing the older ATACMS. The Army is now buying the Precision Strike Missile, so is more comfortable taking ATACMS off the shelves to provide to Ukraine, the official said.

At the White House, Sullivan said the administration "has worked relentlessly to address those concerns" and stocks are now coming off the production line and the ATACMS can be sent without hurting U.S. military readiness. □

Supreme Court appears skeptical that state abortion bans conflict with federal health care law

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Conservative Supreme Court justices appeared skeptical Wednesday that state abortion bans after their sweeping ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade* violate federal healthcare law, though some also questioned the effects on emergency care for pregnant patients.

The case marks the first time the Supreme Court has considered the implications of a state ban since overturning the nationwide right to abortion. It comes from Idaho, which is among 14 states that now ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy with very limited exceptions.

The high court has already allowed the state ban to go into effect, even in medical emergencies, and it was unclear whether members of the conservative majority were swayed by the Biden administration's argument that federal law overrides the state in rare emergency cases where a pregnant patient's health is at serious risk. The closely watched case tests how open the court is to carving out limited exceptions to state abortion bans. Their ruling, expected by late June, will also affect a similar case in Texas and could have wide implications amid a spike in complaints that pregnant



Anti-Abortion and Abortion-rights activists rally outside the Supreme Court, Wednesday, April 24, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

women have been turned away from emergency rooms care since *Roe* was overturned.

The Biden administration says abortion care must be allowed in those cases under a law that requires hospitals accepting Medicare to provide emergency care regardless of patients' ability to pay.

Justice Samuel Alito, who wrote the decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, was doubtful. "How can you impose restrictions on what Idaho can criminalize, simply because hospitals in Idaho have chosen to par-

ticipate in Medicare?" Alito said. Idaho contends its ban does have exceptions for life-saving abortions, and the administration wants to wrongly expand the times when it's allowed to turn hospitals into "abortion enclaves."

But liberal justices detailed cases of pregnant women hemorrhaging or having to undergo hysterectomies after abortion care was denied or delayed in states with bans.

"Within these rare cases, there's a significant number where the woman's life is not in peril, but she's go-

ing to lose her reproductive organs. She's going to lose the ability to have children in the future unless an abortion takes place," said Justice Elena Kagan.

Conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett, meanwhile, said she was "kind of shocked" that an attorney for Idaho appeared to hedge when asked whether the state would allow abortions in cases like those. Attorney Joshua N. Turner responded that doctors can use their "good faith" medical judgment under Idaho's life-saving exception, but Barrett continued

to press: "What if the prosecutor thinks differently?" Turner acknowledged that a doctor could face a criminal case in that situation. Performing an abortion outside of limited exceptions in Idaho is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison. Most Republican-controlled states have started enforcing new bans or restrictions since *Roe* was overturned, and Turner said those laws all have narrower exceptions than the federal law. "This isn't going to end with Idaho. This question is going to come up in state after state," he said.

Doctors have said Idaho's abortion ban has already affected emergency care. More women whose conditions are typically treated with abortions must now be flown out of state for care, since doctors must wait until they are close to death to provide terminations within the bounds of state law.

Abortion opponents say doctors have mishandled maternal emergency cases, and argue the Biden administration overstates health care woes to undermine state abortion laws.

The justices also heard another abortion case this term seeking to restrict access to abortion medication. It remains pending, though the justices overall seemed skeptical of the push. □

Jill Biden launches bike ride for wounded service members, stresses need to support vets

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden on Wednesday sounded a red horn to start the Wounded Warrior Project's annual Soldier Ride from the White House lawn, using the launch of the multiday bike ride to stress the importance of supporting service members.

"My husband often says that we have many obligations as a nation but only one sacred obligation: to support you and your families when we send you into

harm's way and when you return," she said of President Joe Biden, who is up for reelection.

Jill Biden spoke about steps the administration has taken to expand veteran access to quality home health care, provide benefits and care for veterans harmed by toxins and prevent homelessness and suicide among veterans. She also talked about help for spouses of active-duty and retired servicemembers.

President Biden unexpectedly joined the first lady af-

ter signing a \$95 billion war aid bill and referred to the group of riders as the "spine of America."

The Wounded Warrior Project was founded in 2003 to help veterans and the families and caregivers of service members who suffered a physical or mental injury or illness while serving in the military on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Soldier Ride began in 2004 to help raise awareness for injured veterans. The tradition of starting the ride from the White House began in 2008. □



First lady Jill Biden, in purple, and Sharona Young, retired naval chief petty officer, second from left, watch as wounded warrior riders begin the Wounded Warrior Project's Soldier Ride on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Wednesday, April 24, 2024.

Associated Press

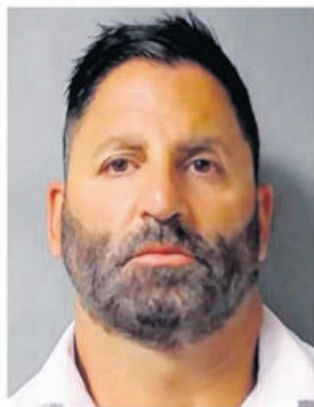
Veteran DEA agent sentenced to 4 years for leaking intelligence in Miami bribery conspiracy

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER, JIM MUSTIAN and JOSHUA GOODMAN**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge Wednesday sentenced a longtime U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent to four years in prison for leaking DEA intelligence to defense lawyers in a \$100,000 bribery scheme that prosecutors said jeopardized drug cases and the lives of confidential informants.

John Costanzo Jr. was found guilty last year of bribery and honest-services wire fraud, joining a growing list of DEA agents convicted of federal crimes. Another former DEA supervisor, Manny Recio, is scheduled to be sentenced next month in the same case. U.S. District Court Judge Paul Oetken, in handing down his sentence, noted that the 49-year-old Costanzo was “especially culpable” as a supervisor because he “knew what he was doing was wrong.” Costanzo, addressing the judge before sentencing, expressed regret for his actions. “This is my cross to bear,” he said. “I will try to find a silver lining in all of this.”



This image provided by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Southern District of New York on Oct. 26, 2023 shows John Costanzo Jr. Associated Press

Prosecutors urged the judge to sentence Costanzo to at least seven years behind bars, saying he abused the tradecraft he mastered as a narcotics investigator steeped in the world of money laundering. He worked in supervisory roles in Miami and later at DEA headquarters outside Washington, D.C.

“Costanzo acted purely out of greed,” prosecutors wrote in court papers. “He used his network, connections and skills to hold himself above the law and make money for leaking law enforcement secrets, undermining everything he purported to stand

for.” Much of the case turned on text messages and wire-tapped phone calls between Costanzo and Recio, who remained close after Recio retired from DEA in 2018 and began working as a private investigator for Miami defense lawyers. Prosecutors allege that attorneys David Macey and Luis Guerra bankrolled the bribery scheme and used the leaked information to approach new clients facing federal drug charges. Macey and Guerra have not been charged but prosecutors in January asked the court for permission to

access normally privileged communications between Recio and the attorneys as part of what they described as an “ongoing” investigation. The DEA did not respond to a request for comment. Costanzo’s sentencing came less than two weeks after a federal jury in Buffalo, New York, convicted another veteran DEA agent of obstruction of justice and lying to federal agents in a sprawling corruption case. Over the course of a year, Recio repeatedly asked Costanzo to query names in a confidential DEA database to keep abreast of federal investigations that would interest his new employers. The two also discussed the timing of high-profile arrests and the exact date in 2019 when prosecutors planned to bring charges against businessman Alex Saab, a top criminal target in Venezuela and suspected bag man for the country’s president, Nicolas Maduro. In exchange, prosecutors said, Recio secretly funneled bribes to Costanzo, including plane tickets and a \$50,000 down payment on a condo in suburban Coral Gables.

The conspiracy relied on middlemen, including Costanzo’s father, himself a retired and decorated DEA agent who prosecutors said lied to the FBI. Prosecutors said Costanzo and Recio also used sham invoices and a company listing its address as a UPS store to disguise the bribe payments while deleting hundreds of messages and calls to a burner phone. In requesting a sentence of probation, Costanzo obtained letters of support from several former colleagues, including three current DEA agents and supervisors who described him as a dedicated public servant, generous friend and expert in illicit finance.

Costanzo’s attorney said his client’s only ambition was to follow in the footsteps of his father, John Costanzo Sr., a retired DEA agent who served for years in Italy and who is now battling pancreatic cancer. “Not being present for his hero’s waning days and final months would break John forever,” defense lawyer Marc Mukasey argued in a pre-sentencing memo. “That is a punishment he does not deserve.” □

Dairy cattle must be tested for bird flu before moving between states, agriculture officials say

By **JONEL ALECCIA**
AP Health Writer

Dairy cattle moving between states must be tested for the bird flu virus, U.S. agriculture officials said

Wednesday as they try to track and control the growing outbreak. The federal order was announced one day after health officials said they

had detected inactivated remnants of the virus, known as Type A H5N1, in samples taken from milk during processing and from store shelves. They stressed that such remnants pose no known risk to people or the milk supply. “The risk to humans remains low,” said Dawn O’Connell of the federal Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response. The new order, which goes into effect Monday, requires every lactating cow to be tested and post a negative result before moving to a new state. It will help the agency understand how the virus is spreading, said Michael Watson, an administrator

with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “We believe we can do tens of thousands of tests a day,” he told reporters. Until now, testing had been done voluntarily and only in cows with symptoms. Avian influenza was first detected in dairy cows in March and has been found in nearly three dozen herds in eight states, according to USDA. It’s an escalation of an ongoing outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza spread by wild birds. Since the start of the outbreak, more than 90 million birds in U.S. commercial flocks have either died from the virus or been killed to try to prevent spread.

Two people in the U.S. both farmworkers have been infected with bird flu since the outbreak began. Health officials said 23 people have been tested for bird flu to date and 44 people exposed to infected animals are being monitored. Officials said that samples from a cow in Kansas showed that the virus could be adapting to more animals and they detected H5N1 virus in the lung tissue of a dairy cow that had been culled and sent to slaughter. So far, officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have seen no signs that the virus is changing to be more transmissible to people. □



Cows are seen at a dairy in California, Nov. 23, 2016. Associated Press

Russia vetoes a U.N. resolution calling for the prevention of a nuclear arms race in space

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) —

Russia on Wednesday vetoed a U.N. resolution sponsored by the United States and Japan calling on all nations to prevent a dangerous nuclear arms race in outer space.

The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 13 in favor, Russia opposed and China abstaining. Russia dismissed the measure as politicized and said it didn't go far enough in banning all types of weapons in space.

The resolution would have called on all countries not to develop or deploy nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction in space, as banned under a 1967 international treaty that included the U.S. and Russia, and to agree to the need to verify compliance. U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said after the vote that Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space, but that the country's veto raises



U.S. Ambassador to United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield speaks on Thursday, April 18, 2024, in Tokyo.

the question of what the government may be hiding. Thomas-Greenfield's announcement of the resolution on March 18 followed White House confirmation in February that Russia has obtained a "troubling" anti-satellite weapon capability, although such a weapon is not operational yet.

Putin declared later that Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space, claiming that the country has only developed space capabilities similar to those of the United States. Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the council before the vote that the resolution was

"absurd and politicized." Nebenzia proposed an amendment to the U.S.-Japan draft saying an arms race in outer space should refer to all kinds of weapons not just nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It was defeated by a vote of 7 countries in favor, 7 against and

one abstention because it failed to get the minimum 9 "yes" votes required for adoption.

The defeated draft resolution said "the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security." It would have urged all countries carrying out activities in exploring and using outer space to comply with international law and the U.N. Charter.

The draft would have affirmed that countries that ratified the 1967 Outer Space Treaty must comply with their obligations not to put in orbit around the Earth "any objects" with weapons of mass destruction, or install them "on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space." The treaty, ratified by some 114 countries including the United States and Russia, prohibits the deployment of "nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction" in orbit or the stationing of "weapons in outer space in any other manner." □

China blasts U.S. military aid to Taiwan, saying the island is entering a 'dangerous situation'

BEIJING (AP) — China on Wednesday blasted the latest package of U.S. military assistance to Taiwan on Wednesday, saying that such funding was pushing the self-governing island republic into a "dangerous situation."

The U.S. Senate late Tuesday passed \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars. China claims the entire island of Taiwan as its own territory and has threatened to take it by force if necessary.

The mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said the aid "seriously violates" U.S. commitments to China and

"sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces."

Office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian added that Taiwan's ruling pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, which won a third four-year presidential term in January, is willing to "become a pawn for external forces to use Taiwan to contain China, bringing Taiwan into a dangerous situation."

On Tuesday, Taiwan's President-elect Lai Ching-te told a visiting U.S. Congressional delegation that the aid package would "strengthen the deterrence against authoritarianism in the West Pacific ally chain" and "help ensure peace and stability across the Taiwan

Strait and also boost confidence in the region."

The package has had broad congressional support since Biden first requested the money last summer. But congressional leaders had to navigate strong opposition from a growing number of conservatives who question U.S. involvement in foreign wars and argue that Congress should be focused instead on the surge of migration at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The package covers a wide range of parts and services aimed at maintaining and upgrading Taiwan's military hardware. Separately, Taiwan has signed billions in contracts with the U.S. for latest-generation F-16V fighter jets, M1 Abrams



In this photo released by the Taiwan Presidential Office, from left Mark Alford, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, U.S. Democratic Congressman Dan Kildee, Lisa McClain, secretary-general of the Republican Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives meets with Taiwan President-elect and Vice President Lai Ching-te in Taipei, Taiwan on Tuesday, April 23, 2024. Associated Press

main battle tanks and the HIMARS rocket system, which the U.S. has also supplied to Ukraine.

Taiwan has also been expanding its own defense industry, building submarines and trainer jets. □

Iran rejects Argentina's request to arrest interior minister over 1994 bombing at Jewish Center

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Iran lashed out at Argentina on Wednesday after the South American country sought the arrest of Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi over his alleged involvement in the deadly 1994 bombing of a Buenos Aires Jewish community center.

Without mentioning Vahidi by name, Iran's Foreign Ministry warned Argentina against "making baseless accusations against citizens of other countries." The warning Wednesday came a day after Argentina demanded that Pakistan act on an Interpol red notice to arrest Vahidi during an official visit to Islamabad.

Vahidi, who is wanted by Interpol, cut his government trip to Southeast Asia short, making an unexpected return to Tehran Wednesday. There was no immediate response from Pakistani authorities.

Argentina's renewed push to hold Iran accountable for the worst such attack in its history comes as right-



Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi briefs the media on elections in Tehran, Iran, March 4, 2024. Associated Press

wing President Javier Milei reshapes foreign policy to align more closely with Iran's bitter enemy, Israel, and as tensions surge between the Mideast foes.

In an apparent reference to Israel, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nass-

er Kanani urged Argentina "not to be influenced by those who are enemies of our bilateral relations."

No one has been convicted for planning or carrying out the 1994 bombing that killed 85 people and wounded over 300 others.

But in recent weeks as Iran faces increasing global isolation and sanctions Argentina has escalated efforts to condemn Iran and its overseas militant network for its alleged involvement. Iran has repeatedly denied any connection to

the attack.

In a move cheered by Israel, Argentina's highest criminal court this month ruled the Iranian government had plotted the 1994 attack as well as a 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires that killed 29 people. Judges singled out three former Iranian officials for their involvement in the Jewish community center attack including Minister Vahidi who at the time led the Revolutionary Guard's expeditionary Quds Force. The court also accused the Iran-backed militant Hezbollah group of executing the attack. Earlier this week Vahidi accompanied Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Islamabad, where he met with his Pakistani counterpart to discuss intelligence-sharing. Although expected to continue on with Raisi's delegation to Sri Lanka, Vahidi abruptly turned back, raising speculation that Argentina's request had complicated his international travel. □

The head of Mexico's detective service says his country is the 'champion' of fentanyl production

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The head of Mexico's detective service acknowledged Tuesday that the country is "the champion" of fentanyl production, something that appears to run counter to past statements by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

López Obrador has hotly denied in the past that any fentanyl is produced in Mexico, saying Mexican cartels only press it into pills or add finishing touches.

But Felipe de Jesus Gallo, the head of Mexico's Criminal Investigation Agency, said that since the 1990s "Mexico has been the champion of methamphetamine production, and now fentanyl." He spoke at a U.S.-Mexico conference on synthetic drugs in Mexico City.

Experts agree that cartels



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador gives his regularly scheduled morning press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City, Tuesday, April 16, 2024. Associated Press

in Mexico use precursor chemicals from China and India to make the synthetic opioid and smuggle it into the United States, where it causes about 70,000 overdose deaths annually.

While fentanyl is not widely abused in Mexico, meth-

amphetamine addiction is commonplace.

Gallo said that Mexican cartels have launched industrial-scale production of meth in many states throughout the country and now export the drug around the world.

"Believe me, methamphetamine production has become industrialized, it's not just in the mountains anymore," Gallo said. "We now expect to see (drug) laboratories not just in the mountains of Sinaloa and Sonora, but in Hidalgo as well, Puebla, and also in Jalisco."

He was apparently referring to thousands of drug labs detected in previous years in the hills and scrublands around Culiacan, the capital of the northern state of Sinaloa. Those clandestine, rural production sites were often bare-bones, improvised labs covered with tree branches and tarpaulins.

Now, the meth trade has become so lucrative and so sophisticated that Mexican meth is exported as far away as Hong Kong or Aus-

tralia, and the cartels have found ways to avoid detection of their drug money.

"The business models have become very innovative, or as old and antiquated as barter; 'I'll trade you precursor chemicals for meth,' to avoid leaving a money trail," Gallo said.

There is little question that drug production goes on at a huge scale in Mexico. In February, Mexico's Navy seized over 45 tons of methamphetamine at the biggest drug lab found during the current administration. The lab was in Quiriego, a township in a remote part of the northern border state of Sonora.

The 91,000 pounds (41,310 kilograms) of meth found there was more than half of the 162,000 pounds of the drug Mexico has seized so far this year. □

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names



Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.



Ayo

Ajo, or Ayo, is a word with Arawak-Indian origin. A (or Ha) is an Indo-Antillean generalizing word. If you were to change a part of the word "Ayo", namely 'Yo', to 'Yu' and make 'Ayu', it would mean "white."

However, as we now know, the name of the neighborhood is 'Ayo'. The word 'Yo' stands for Yocahu, which is another word for 'creator' in Arawak/Taino and in the Papiamentu spoken today, 'Ayo' means 'bye'.

At Ayo, you can find some of the most well known rock formations. These formations became a well loved and visited attraction at Aruba that is held in high regards by both tourists and locals alike.

If you'd like to know more about the rock formations at Ayo, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all about its location and history.



This neighborhood's abbreviation is; A.

Alto Vista

This word combination can be roughly translated to a 'high point of view' and the neighborhood received this name from the Hill.

In the surrounding areas, Domingo Antonia Silvestre built his by his own means the very first chapel or church of Aruba. The walls of this church were made with rocks but the roof was made of dry corn stalks. The church was inaugurated by father Pablo Algemesi

If you'd like to know more about the Alto Vista Church's beautiful history, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all you need to know about it for when you visit it.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; AV.

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage

was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the



road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone

grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your “off-road” trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding “mondi”*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island.



However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more acces-

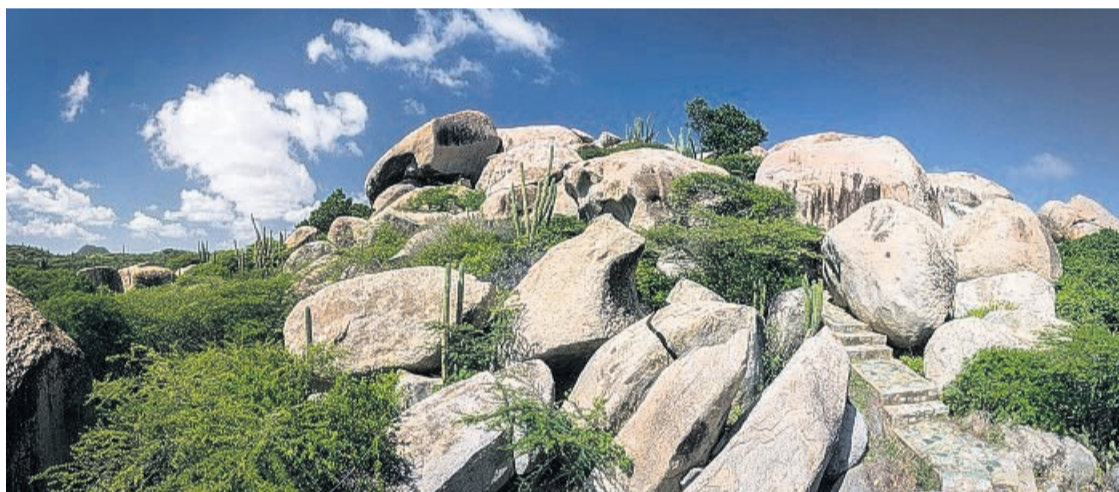


sible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you

can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure!

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! ☐



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish

your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Aruba to me

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our awesome visitor Lainey Cross from Bethel, Maine, USA.

She wrote to us saying: “14 years ago my 75 year old mom traveled to Aruba alone. Because of work, I was arriving 4 days later. She told me what a wonderful experience she had had with a taxi driver. On the way to the resort the driver asked if she would like to stop anywhere? My mother replied that she would like to get a few groceries. Once at the grocery store the driver accompanied her inside and pushed the cart for her. When arriving at the resort, the driver waited for her to check in, then lugged the groceries in to our room and help put them away. Prior to arriving in Aruba this year

my 89 year old mom found that driver's card. I got online and contacted the taxi company to see if they were still driving. I was told, yes they were. I said we were coming in March and hoped to meet the driver.

On March 28th, I called the driver and they agreed to take us to the airport despite it being their day off, as it was good Friday. This was done as a surprise for my mom to see the driver again. On Friday morning it was a happy reunion for the driver and my mother and a pleasure for me to meet the person who took such good care of my mom. That person is Jasmin Lampe. I am honored to mention her by name. Jasmin like so many others on the island go above and beyond to make meet their visitors needs. That's what Aruba Means to me.”

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

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Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Casa del Mar!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. These Ambassadors were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were: Emerald Ambassadors Mr. William Shea & Mrs. Donna Shea from Massachusetts, United States.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Casa del Mar bestowed the honor certification to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

- "Love to bring our family members here."
- "The many lifelong friends we have made here on the island."
- "Aruba is our home away from home."
- Aruba makes us feel safe + Aruba has the friendliest people.
- Aruba is easy to travel too.



On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for his continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



ST. CRUZ — The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park,

Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished

a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds aware-

ness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands). (Source: arikok national park)

The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress

enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it! □

Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.



Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.



Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let

their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.



Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.



Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 1)

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then



you need to switch to the left lane on the highway before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The

basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

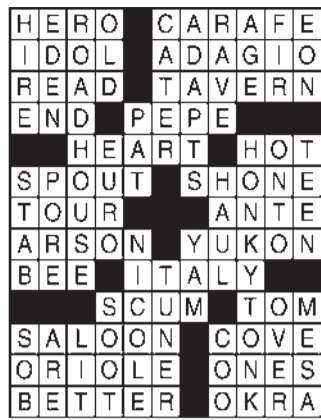
It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! ☐



CROSSWORD

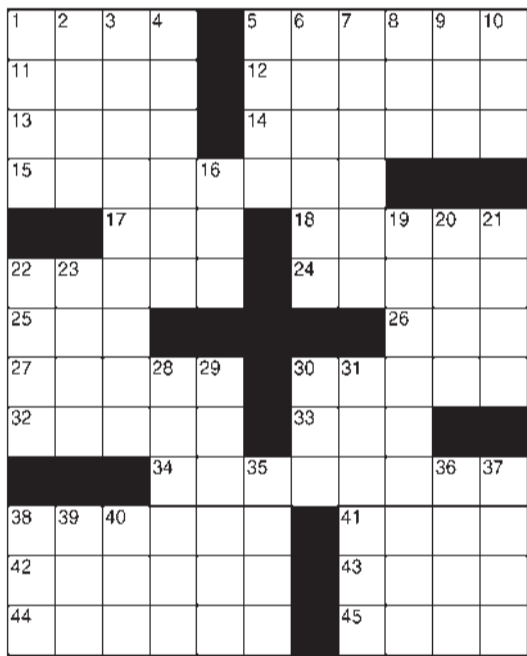
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Choir voice
 - 5 Justice symbol
 - 11 Wander
 - 12 Place
 - 13 Qualified
 - 14 Like some mushrooms
 - 15 Roared
 - 17 Kayo count
 - 18 Stair part
 - 22 "Keen!"
 - 24 Chump
 - 25 Athena's symbol
 - 26 Massage need
 - 27 Turns suddenly
 - 30 Writer Bret
 - 32 Useful ability
 - 33 Drama division
 - 34 Britain's Thatcher
 - 38 Not out
 - 41 Dreaded
 - 42 Ways to go
 - 43 Wading bird
 - 44 Sidewalk stuff
 - 45 Invites
- DOWN**
- 1 Swift horse
 - 2 Ear part
 - 3 Yarns
 - 4 Brunch dish
 - 5 Whole lot
 - 6 Software writers
 - 7 Like lemon juice
 - 8 Research site
 - 9 Building wing
 - 10 Notice
 - 16 Lennon's love
 - 19 Beef cut
 - 20 Throw off
 - 21 Part easy
 - 22 Flaring star
 - 23 Some sheep
 - 28 TV accessory
 - 29 Flower part
 - 30 Crone
 - 31 Maine park
 - 35 Take it
 - 36 Composer Satie
 - 37 Thomas Hardy
 - 38 Compass trace
 - 39 Sock part
 - 40 Engine sound



Yesterday's answer

- 20 Throw off
- 21 Part easy
- 22 Flaring star
- 23 Some sheep
- 28 TV accessory
- 29 Flower part
- 30 Crone
- 31 Maine park
- 35 Take it
- 36 Composer Satie
- 37 Thomas Hardy
- 38 Compass trace
- 39 Sock part
- 40 Engine sound



4-25

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.

4-25

CRYPTOQUOTE

Z F O H N P J N D Y G K R F
P F N X P P F L K G X G V Y N Y H L K R J K
O H P F K R J L R J U I H I K R F
V F H V U F J P F P Y A R K O H P F K R J L

R J U I K R F K Y O F. — F.S. Q R Y K F
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TURN YOUR FACE TO THE SUN, AND THE SHADOWS FALL BEHIND YOU. — UNKNOWN

Cruise ship Schedule: Apr 22 - Apr 30 2024

TUE	30	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	20.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
		CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	I	1

Cruise ship Schedule: May 01 - May 22 2024

TUE	07	CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	14	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
WED	15	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	21	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	C	1
WED	22	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	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 occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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A couple watches the sun set from a park, July 10, 2021, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

About 1 in 4 U.S. adults 50 and older who aren't yet retired expect to never retire, AARP study finds

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — About one-quarter of U.S. adults age 50 and older who are not yet retired say they expect to never retire and 70% are concerned about prices rising faster than their income, an AARP survey finds. About 1 in 4 have no retirement savings, according to research released Wednesday by the organization that shows how a graying America is worrying more and more about how to make ends meet even as economists and policymakers say the U.S. economy has all but achieved a soft landing after two years of record inflation.

Everyday expenses and housing costs, including rent and mortgage payments, are the biggest reasons why people are unable to save for retirement. The data will matter this election year as Democratic President Joe Biden and Republican rival Donald Trump are trying to win support from older Americans, who traditionally turn out in high numbers, with their policy proposals. The AARP's study, based on interviews completed with more than 8,000 people in coordination with the

NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, finds that one-third of older adults with credit card debt carry a balance of more than \$10,000 and 12% have a balance of \$20,000 or more. Additionally, 37% are worried about meeting basic living costs such as food and housing. "Far too many people lack access to retirement savings options and this, coupled with higher prices, is making it increasingly hard for people to choose when to retire," said Indira Venkateswaran, AARP's senior vice president of research. □

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8 ways to personalize your rental and get your deposit back

By **RONITA CHOUDHURI-WADE** of NerdWallet

While renting apartments in San Francisco, Malone Detro often made small changes to the walls or fixtures to match her particular taste and budget.

"There are a lot of ways in which a rental home can feel not like home," says Detro, founder of Malone, an interior design and architecture firm.

Detro says making cosmetic upgrades, even if you're renting, can help you feel excited about your living space.

"I think it helps, ultimately, in you feeling proud about your home," she says.

Renting an apartment or house can mean a shorter commitment than home ownership and it's often a more affordable option in major cities. However, renters may feel constrained when personalizing a rented space, especially when the landlord holds your security deposit.

With a little creativity and your landlord's approval there are ways to make your rental feel more like home and still get your deposit back. Here are eight lease-friendly home upgrades, from least to most amount of work required.

1. PERSONALIZED FLOOR COVERINGS

Adam Aitable, a comedi-



A "For Rent" sign displays outside apartment building in Skokie, Ill., Sunday, April 14, 2024.

Associated Press

an who rents in Tulsa, Oklahoma, says "comfort and feeling" are priorities when it comes to updating his apartment. A focal point in his living room is a rug with images of bacon strips, a food he enjoys.

"That's something people walk in and they'll notice," he says.

2. BETTER SHOWERHEADS

A new rainfall or massaging showerhead can significantly boost your daily shower experience, and it's easy to swap with an existing head. Swap again when you move out and take your upgraded showerhead with you.

3. STYLISH CABINET HARD-

WARE

Cabinets are often the focal points in kitchens and bathrooms. Update the look by replacing the knobs, pulls or handles. Choose finishes that complement existing fixtures and faucets.

Consider new pulls for the closets, too.

4. SMART-HOME GADGETS

Tech-enabled home accessories can make your rental more convenient. In addition to Wi-Fi-enabled plugs for lamps, Aitable attached a voice-activated smart device to his curtains.

"I just tell it in the morning, 'open the bedroom,' and it slides the entire cur-

tain open for me," he says. "That helps me get out of bed if I'm feeling lazy."

5. WINDOW FLAIR

Curtains play an important role in setting the mood of a space. Blackout shades in a bedroom or light-filtering curtains for a living room can add functionality.

"Window treatments are really easy to install yourself," says Detro, who used tension curtain rods, which don't require drilling holes and are easy to remove.

6. BRIGHTER LIGHT FIXTURES

Swapping outdated light fixtures with stylish sconces or pendants can elevate the look and feel of a room. Choose fixtures that ac-

commodate bulbs with the correct wattage and store the originals.

7. REMOVABLE WALLPAPER

Removable wallpaper adds pattern and texture to walls without causing permanent damage. Choose a bold print to create an accent wall and liven up small spaces. Peel-and-stick options require precision to apply but shouldn't leave a residue when removed.

8. FRESH PAINT

Adding fresh paint to the walls of an old apartment can easily brighten and modernize a rental. Detro suggests choosing neutral colors that are easy to paint over and using furnishings to bring color and character to the room.

AFFORDING HOME UPGRADES

Landlords generally don't pay for upgrades, or for returning the rental to its original condition, which means you'll likely have to pay out of pocket.

One way to make upgrades worthwhile is to invest in items you can bring to your next home. For expensive purchases, home improvement retailers like Amazon and Home Depot offer payment plans like "buy now, pay later" that allow you to pay in installments over weeks or months. □

Cyberattacks are on the rise, and that includes small businesses. Here's what to know



A person works on a laptop in North Andover, Mass., on June 19, 2017.

Associated Press

By **MAE ANDERSON**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Cyberattacks on businesses are rising, including small businesses. It's a troubling trend because a breach can be very costly and time consuming if owners don't have a plan to deal with one.

According to the Verizon 2023 Data Breach Investigations Report, the median cost per ransomware attack which features a type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid more than doubled over the past two years to \$26,000.

That's partly because there has been a dramatic increase in ransomware attacks, which represent 24% of all breaches.

Small businesses should first have a plan in place to prevent cyberattacks.

The human element is the cause of 74% of breaches, so owners should make sure all of their employees use safeguards such as two-factor identification to make it harder to be hacked. Requiring employees to regularly change their passwords can also help.

If your business has been breached, it's best to work with a cybersecurity executive within your company or a trusted third party to assess what happened and the damage done.

Trying to contain it without having the right technical knowledge can just make things worse.

It's also important to let the authorities know what happened. Attacks must be reported to federal authorities within 72 hours after a company is reasonably sure one has occurred. □

Reggie Bush is reinstated as 2005 Heisman Trophy winner, with organizers citing NIL rule changes

By GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Reggie Bush has his Heisman back. The Heisman Trust reinstated the former Southern California tailback as the 2005 Heisman Trophy winner on Wednesday, citing fundamental changes in the structure of college athletics during the 14 years since Bush forfeited the trophy and the honor.

Bush gave up his Heisman following an NCAA investigation that found he received what were impermissible benefits during his time with the Trojans. College football players are now allowed to profit from their work in many ways, and the Heisman Trust decided it was time to move past the conflict with one of the most exciting players in the sport's history.

"We are thrilled to welcome Reggie Bush back to the Heisman family in recognition of his collegiate accomplishments," said Michael Comerford, president of The Heisman Trophy Trust. "We considered the enormous changes in college athletics over the last several years in deciding that now is the right time to reinstate the Trophy for Reggie. We are so happy to welcome him back." The Heisman Trust has returned the trophy to Bush and the replica to USC. Bush also will be invited to all future Heisman Trophy ceremonies.

Bush won the trophy awarded to the top player in college football after amassing 2,218 yards from scrimmage and scoring 18 touchdowns in 2005. His 784 first-place votes were the fifth most in Heisman history, and the trophy was a crowning achievement for Bush after three seasons at USC as one of the most dynamic college football players in decades. "I am grateful to once again be recognized as the recipient of the Heisman Trophy," Bush said in a statement. "This reinstatement is not only a personal victory, but also a validation of the tireless efforts of my supporters and advocates who have stood by me throughout this ardu-



Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush of the University of Southern California smiles while posing for photos after a news conference in New York, Dec. 10, 2005.

ous journey."

The reinstatement of Bush gives USC a total of eight Heisman winners, most of any school.

USC typically displays its replicas of the Trojans' Heisman Trophies in the lobby of Heritage Hall, its historic football headquarters, while the retired uniform numbers of its Heisman winners are displayed on huge banners draping the Peristyle at the Coliseum during USC home games. Bush's No. 5 jersey is expected to be back among the honored numbers this fall.

"What a historic day!" said USC coach Lincoln Riley, who coached Caleb Williams to the school's most recent Heisman in 2022. "Reggie's reintroduction to the Heisman Family is a special moment for every person that has been associated with USC football. We are thrilled that Reggie's athletic accomplishments as one of the greatest to ever play the game can officially be recognized."

The USC football program wrote "back where it belongs" in a social media post.

"This is a momentous day for Reggie Bush and the entire USC community as we celebrate the rightful return of his Heisman Trophy," USC athletic director Jen Cohen said. "Reggie's impact at USC and on college football as a whole is truly unmatched. He has displayed the utmost resiliency and heart throughout this process and is so deserving of every accolade and trophy he's ever received. We are grateful to the Heisman Trophy Trust for making this happen."

Bush had his award vacated in 2010 after USC was hit with massive NCAA sanctions when it was found that Bush and his family received money and gifts from fledgling marketing agents who were hoping to represent him. The sanctions were the final result of a prolonged, antagonistic dispute between the NCAA and USC under former athletic director Mike Garrett.

USC received a two-year postseason ban and lost a whopping 30 scholarships under the sanctions. The NCAA also vacated 14 wins by the Trojans during the heart of Bush's career,

including the 55-19 victory over Oklahoma in the Bowl Championship Series title game at the Orange Bowl following the 2004 season. USC was even required to "disassociate" from Bush for 10 years following the NCAA's decision. The school immediately ended its disassociation when that period ended in June 2020, welcoming Bush back to the school. The Trust said in its statement that its decision followed a "deliberative process" in which it closely monitored changes in the college athletics landscape. That included the U.S. Supreme Court's 2021 decision that questioned the legality of the NCAA's amateurism model and opened the door to athlete compensation; the ability of players to be paid for their name, image and likeness; and the NCAA's recent proposal to remove the cap on education-related payments.

"Recognizing that the compensation of student athletes is an accepted practice and appears here to stay, these fundamental changes in college athletics led the Trust to decide

that now is the right time to return the Trophy to Bush, who unquestionably was the most outstanding college football player of 2005," the Trust said.

Public opinion has long favored the return of Bush's trophy. Johnny Manziel, the 2012 Heisman winner from Texas A&M, said on social media last month that he would not participate in Heisman festivities unless Bush got his trophy back.

Manziel thanked the Trust on Wednesday "for doing what's right and welcoming a storied member of our history back into the fold. There were many voices throughout this process that stood on the table for Reggie simply because of the kind of human being he is. I look forward to being on that stage with you this December (Reggie Bush) you deserve it."

Among others praising the decision were Williams, the 2022 winner and the projected No. 1 pick in Thursday's NFL draft; 2001 winner Eric Crouch of Nebraska; and 2011 winner Robert Griffin III of Baylor.

Bush was the No. 2 overall pick in the 2006 NFL draft by New Orleans, and he played for five teams over 11 seasons. He is now a commentator and studio analyst for Fox Sports.

Last August, Bush filed a defamation lawsuit against the NCAA for issuing a statement to media in 2021 that said Bush had a "pay-for-play" arrangement. That statement was in response to media inquiries about whether Bush would have his statistics from his USC career reinstated when NIL payments became permissible. Bush contended the statement cast him in a false light. "I want to make it abundantly clear that I have always acted with integrity and in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by the NCAA," Bush said Wednesday. "The allegations brought against me were unfounded and unsupported by evidence, and I am grateful that the truth is finally prevailing." □

Associated Press

Nadal says he is not 100% fit ahead of Madrid debut. Spaniard still unsure about playing French Open

By **TALES AZZONI**
AP Sports Writer

MADRID (AP) — Rafael Nadal will play in the Madrid Open despite not being fully fit and didn't seem too optimistic about his chances of being ready for the French Open next month.

The 37-year-old Nadal said Wednesday he would not play in Paris if he arrives there feeling the same way that he is feeling ahead of his opening match in Madrid this week.

"The sensations haven't been perfect this week. If it wasn't Madrid, maybe I wouldn't play. But there are a lot of emotions involved," Nadal said. "I don't know what's going to happen in



Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal gives a press conference at the Mutua Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid, Wednesday, April 24, 2024.

Associated Press

the following three weeks. I'll keep fighting and doing the things that I think I need to do to play in Paris. And if it's possible, then it's

possible. If not, then not. I'm not going to play in Paris the way I'm feeling today. If it was Paris, I wouldn't be playing."

Nadal has said this is likely his farewell year on tour, and is hoping to be competitive one last time at Roland Garros, where he is a 14-time champion.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion has won a record five times in Madrid, with his last title in the Spanish capital coming in 2017. He is scheduled to debut on Thursday against 16-year-old American Darwin Blanch.

"Hopefully I can play without many limitations," Nadal said. "Then we'll see what happens. If I play without limitations, even if I lose, then it will be positive." Nadal, who had hip surgery last summer, lost to Alex de Minaur in the second round

in Barcelona in what was his first tournament in more than three months.

"The goal is be on court. Enjoy as long as possible," he said. "I mean, that's the thing. Try to finish the tournament alive in terms of body issues, and enjoy the fact that I will be able to compete one more time in the professional tour and here at home in Madrid, a place that give me everything, no, in terms of support." He said he is giving himself "a chance" and hopes to "find better feelings" in his body going forward.

"I don't lose hope. I just accept the situation that I have today," Nadal said. "I mean, I am not playing bad.

It's about more body limitations. ... That's not allowed me to compete the way that I would like to compete."

WOMEN'S DRAW

Former world No. 1 Naomi Osaka earned her first win on clay in two years by defeating lucky loser Greet Minnen 6-4, 6-1 in the first round.

Osaka had eight aces and faced one break point for her first clay win since beating Anastasia Potapova in the first round in Madrid in 2022.

"There's a basis to my game and I want to stick to that, but also respect the court," said Osaka, who returned from maternity leave in January. "It's a work in progress for me, but I'm watching a lot more matches on clay, I'm trying to do my homework as best as I can."

Qualifier Jessica Bouzas Maneiro rallied to defeat fellow Spaniard Paula Badosa 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 to earn her first WTA 1000 main-draw victory and improve her 2024 record to 30-7.

"The tennis level is there, but I need to recover emotionally," said Badosa, a former No. 2 in the world. "Every week is a disappointment. I've been at the top and it's tough to see myself at the bottom right now." □

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