



AR-15 style guns sold as a sign of manhood as shootings rise



Michael Morrison, the former owner of Sunrise Tactical Supply, describes the gun he sold to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooter Nikolas Cruz as he testifies during the penalty phase of Cruz's trial at the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on Tuesday, July 26, 2022. Associated Press

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Gun makers have taken in more than \$1 billion from selling AR-15-style guns over the past decade, at times marketing them as a way for

young men to prove their masculinity, even as the number of mass shootings increases, according to a House investigation unveiled Wednesday. The weapons have been used in massacres that

have horrified the nation, including one that left 10 people dead at a grocery store in Buffalo and another where 19 children and two teachers were shot to death in Uvalde, Texas.

Continued on next page

Republic of Peru celebrates 201st Independence Day



Name and flag of Aruba for the first time in America's Got Talent



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Continued from Front

The Committee on Oversight and Reform said some ads mimic popular first-person shooter video games or tout the weapons' military pedigree while others claim the guns will put buyers "at the top of the testosterone food chain."

Those sales tactics are "deeply disturbing, exploitative and reckless," said Democratic Rep. Carolyn Maloney of New York. "In short, the gun industry is profiting off the blood of innocent Americans."

Gun makers, on the other hand, said AR-15-style rifles are responsible for a small portion of gun homicides and the blame must go to the shooters rather than their weapons.

"What we saw in Uvalde, Buffalo and Highland Park was pure evil," said Marty Daniels, the CEO of Daniel Defense, the company that made the weapon used in Texas. "The cruelty of the murderers who committed these acts is unfathomable and deeply disturbs me, my family, my employees and millions of Americans across this country."

However, he added later in testimony before the committee, "I believe that these murders are local problems that have to be solved locally."

Gun violence overall spiked in 2020, but recent statistics indicate it is coming down this year in many cities.

The House panel's investigation focused on five major gunmakers, and found



AR-15-style rifles are on display at Burbank Ammo & Guns in Burbank, Calif., June 23, 2022.

Associated Press

they took in a combined total of more than \$1 billion in revenue over the past 10 years from the sale of AR-15-style firearms. The revenue numbers were released for the committee hearing focused on the marketing and sales of the firearms that have gained notoriety because of their use in the mass killings.

Two of the companies approximately tripled their revenue from the weapons over the past three years, the committee found. Daniel Defense, based near Savannah, Georgia, raised that revenue from \$40 million in 2019 to more than \$120 million last year. The company sells weapons like the one used in Uvalde on credit and advertises

that financing can be approved "in seconds."

Salvador Ramos, accused in the Uvalde shootings, began purchasing firearms and ammunition when he turned 18, eventually spending more than \$5,000 on two AR-style rifles, ammunition and other gear in the days before the massacre, authorities have said.

Sturm, Ruger & Co.'s gross revenue, meanwhile, has nearly tripled from \$39 million to \$103 million since 2019, and Smith and Wesson reported that its revenues from all long guns doubled from 2019 to 2021. Gun manufacturers, the committee said, don't gather or analyze safety data related to firearms.

The increases are against a

backdrop of a record-setting overall increase in gun sales that began around the start of the coronavirus pandemic. About 8.5 million people bought guns for the first time in 2020, said Republican Rep. Jody Hice of Georgia. He added that, "American people have a right to own guns." The hearing comes amid a push by House Democrats to get legislation passed that would ban certain semi-automatic weapons. It's the lawmakers' most far-reaching response yet to this summer's mass shootings.

While AR-15-style firearms aren't necessarily the main drivers of U.S. gun violence overall, their design allows shooters to harm more

people from a greater distance, said Kelly Sampson, senior counsel and director of racial justice with Brady, a group pressing to end gun violence that generally supports restrictions.

"If we renew the assault weapons ban, that would take away a key piece of what allows mass shooters to kill more people in less time without having to stop to reload," she said.

There have been 15 mass killings this year, according to the Associated Press/USA TODAY/Northeastern University Mass Killing Database. According to that research, those incidents have left 86 dead and 63 injured. Guns were used in all of them, and in at least seven instances they were AR-15-style weapons. Mass killings are defined as incidents where at least four people are killed.

But the AR-15 and similar weapons are also popular with people who buy guns for self defense, said Antonia Okafor, the national director of outreach for the group Gun Owners of America. Such rifles allow people, including women, to shoot a larger gun without having to absorb as much recoil. "The AR-15 makes it easier for those who have a physical disadvantage to the attacker to have an upper hand," she said. Wednesday's hearing marked the first time in 20 years that CEOs of leading gun manufacturers testified about their businesses, Maloney said. □



Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, center, is joined by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., center left, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., far left, former Kansas Sen. Jerry Moran, center right, for the dedication and unveiling ceremony of a statue in honor of Amelia Earhart, one of the world's most celebrated aviators and the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, in Statuary Hall, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, July 27, 2022.

Associated Press

Aviator Amelia Earhart honored with statue at U.S. Capitol

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional leaders and Kansas officials praised aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart on Wednesday for advancing the cause of women's rights during her barrier-breaking career at a ceremony unveiling her statue in the U.S. Capitol.

Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, joins President Dwight Eisenhower as Kansas icons enshrined in the National Statuary Hall Collection. She is the 11th woman honored with

a statue in the collection, where each state is represented by two people of significance.

U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids of Kansas said that while Earhart is best known for flying across the ocean, she was also a military nurse, social worker, author, and a champion for women's advancement. "Female pilots used to be called 'ladybirds,' 'sweethearts of the air,' and because of Amelia Earhart, back then, now and into the future, women who fly planes are now

called 'pilots,'" Davids said. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi noted that Earhart, who was born and raised in Atchison, Kansas, was the first woman to ever receive the Distinguished Flying Cross from the U.S. Congress. "Not only was she an outstanding aviator, but she had a strong moral compass as an outspoken champion for gender equality," Pelosi said. "Amelia envisioned aviation as a great equalizer, and she fought valiantly to close the gender gap." □



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DOJ: Buffett company discriminated against Black homebuyers

NEW YORK (AP) — A Pennsylvania mortgage company owned by billionaire businessman Warren Buffett's company discriminated against potential Black and Latino homebuyers in Philadelphia, New Jersey and Delaware, the Department of Justice said Wednesday, in what is being called the second-largest redlining settlement in history.

Trident Mortgage Co., a division of Berkshire Hathaway's HomeServices of America, deliberately avoided writing mortgages in minority-majority neighborhoods in West Philadelphia like Malcolm X Park; Camden, New Jersey; and in Wilmington, Delaware, the Justice Department and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said in their settlement with Trident.

As part of the agreement with the government, Trident will have to set aside \$20 million to make loans in underserved neighborhoods.

"Trident's unlawful redlining activity denied communities of color equal access to residential mortgages, stripped them of the opportunity to build wealth, and devalued properties in their neighborhoods," said Kristen Clarke, an assistant attorney general of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, in a prepared statement.

Sen. Vincent Hughes, a Philadelphia Democrat, grew up a few blocks from the West Philadelphia park where a news conference on the settlement was held



Kristen Clarke, at podium, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, is joined with, from left, New Jersey First Assistant Attorney General Lyndsay Ruotolo, Pennsylvania state Sen. Vincent Hughes, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, Rohit Chopra, CFPB Director, Delaware Attorney General Kathy Jennings and Jacqueline C. Romero, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania during a press conference at Malcolm X Park, Wednesday morning, July 27, 2022, West Philadelphia, Pa.

Associated Press

Wednesday. Hughes said portions of his life have been framed by the discriminatory lending practices that prevent Black and brown communities from building wealth.

Hughes' father worked for one of the oldest Black-owned savings and loans, a company name Berean that would finance mortgages for Black families when they were turned away by other banks and lenders.

"I've had people come up to me and say, 'Vince, your dad gave me a mortgage for my first home when I was turned down everywhere else. If it wasn't for Berean and your dad, I wouldn't have been able to buy my home,'" Hughes said. "We

witnessed that discrimination in real time."

Redlining is a term used to describe when banks deliberately avoid making loans to non-white communities. Banks and the U.S. government used to draw on maps in red marker those neighborhoods that were deemed undesirable to make home loans. The neighborhoods were almost always areas where racial minorities lived, and even included other historically discriminated-against communities such as Jewish neighborhoods.

The practice effectively cut off entire communities from the primary pathway for wealth generation in the U.S.: homeownership. To this day, Black and Latino

households are far less likely to own their home compared to their white counterparts.

The alleged redlining activity alleged happened between 2015 and 2019 — Trident stopped writing mortgages in 2020. Along with avoiding making mortgages in minority neighborhoods, the Trident employees made racist comments about making loans to Black homebuyers, calling certain neighborhoods "ghettos." One manager of Trident was photographed posing in front of the Confederate flag. The marketing materials used by Trident involved exclusively white individuals, and nearly all of the company's staff were white.

Josh Shapiro, Pennsylvania's attorney general who is running for governor, called the behavior by Trident "systematic racism, pure and simple."

Philadelphia has a long history of racism toward Black homebuyers. The Philadelphia City Council released a report Wednesday that found that 95% of all of the city's home appraisers were white and a racial gap remains between how homes owned by Black homeowners are valued versus homes owned by white owners.

Hughes said he and other legislators were furious about revelations of the redlining by Trident and others in a 2018 investigation by Reveal into Buffett's mortgage companies. They pressed Shapiro during an appropriations hearing, and the Attorney General responded by setting up a hotline to gather personal stories.

As part of the settlement, Trident agreed to hire mortgage loan officers in impacted neighborhoods as well as pay a \$4 million fine. Since Trident no longer operates a lending business, a separate company will be contracted to provide the \$20 million in loan subsidies, the Justice Department said.

The Trident settlement also involves the first redlining case against a nonbank mortgage lender. Since the Great Recession, roughly half of all mortgages in the country are underwritten by companies that immediately sell off the mortgage to investors. □

Whistleblowers hit Southwest, FAA for lax safety practices

By DAVID KOENIG AP

Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Federal officials say that Southwest Airlines and the union representing its pilots have resisted cooperating with investigations into accidents and other incidents and pushed to close the matters quickly.

In one instance disclosed Wednesday, the Federal Aviation Administration cut short an investigation of a 2019 incident in Connecticut even though the agency determined that there was pilot error. Both wings of the Southwest jet were damaged as pilots battling wind tried to land at Bradley International Airport, outside of Hartford.

The FAA said Southwest and union officials resisted interviews with agency representatives in that and other cases. Sometimes the delaying tactics worked. An investigation into why pilots placed duct tape over sensors outside a plane before a flight fizzled when the FAA employee took another job.

Neither Southwest nor its pilots' union responded immediately to requests for comment.

The FAA investigation was disclosed Wednesday by



Southwest Airlines planes at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix, July 17, 2019. Associated Press

the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, which represents federal whistleblowers. It reported another accident — a plane that went off the runway in Burbank, California — in which an FAA review was "fast-tracked" under pressure from Southwest. In a separate review of that incident, the National Transportation Review Board found that the copilot's conduct was "highly unprofessional."

The FAA said it agreed with some of the allegations

raised by three whistleblowers and took corrective steps including more training and development of audits to ensure compliance with aviation-safety guidelines.

The special counsel's office investigated eight allegations raised by four whistleblowers. The office forwarded its findings to the White House and Congress.

In a response to the special counsel's office, the FAA said it found "mismanagement and lack of oversight"

by the office monitoring Southwest that has persisted despite management and staff changes over the years. The FAA said new executives will provide "a fresh opportunity to evaluate" the oversight of Southwest.

Some of the whistleblower accusations have been leveled before, including Southwest's use of planes bought overseas without verifying their maintenance and inspection records. In more than half of those

cases, the airline found that the planes had undergone repair work that wasn't documented or couldn't be verified.

The FAA said some of the whistleblower allegations couldn't be proven, including a claim that Southwest routinely assigns too much work for mechanics to handle.

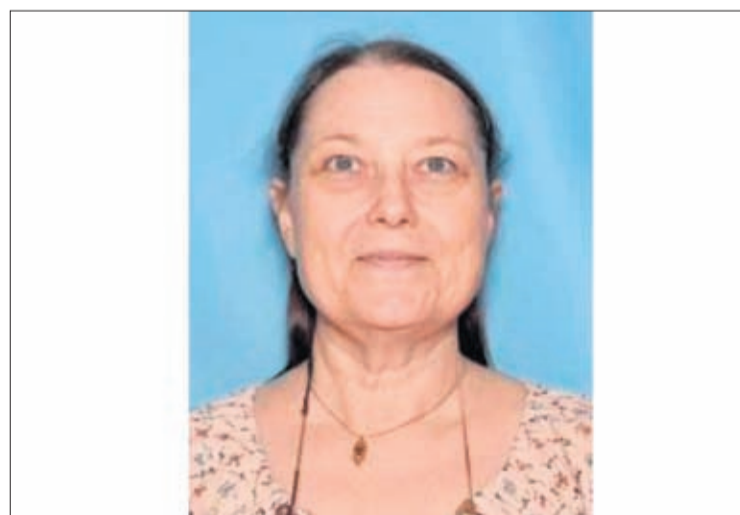
A separate allegation that the FAA improperly certified Southwest for long overwater flights — approval the airline needed to sell flights to Hawaii — was examined by the Transportation Department's inspector general, who could not verify the claim.

An FAA spokeswoman said the agency takes the special counsel's concerns seriously and has adopted its recommendations.

Dallas-based Southwest has faced questions about safety over the years and has paid millions to settle safety violations, however, it has a good record over its five-decade history.

No passenger had died in an accident involving a Southwest plane until 2018, when a woman was killed after an engine broke apart over Pennsylvania and debris shattered the window next to her seat. □

Hawaii couple charged with stealing IDs of dead Texas kids



This undated photo provided by the United States District Court District of Hawaii shows Walter Glenn Primrose, left, also known as Bobby Edward Fort and this undated photo provided by the United States District Court District of Hawaii shows Gwynn Darle Morrison, right, aka Julie Lyn Montague.

Associated Press

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLER and BRIAN MELLEY

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A U.S. defense contractor and his

wife who lived for decades under the identities of two dead Texas children have been charged with identity theft and conspiring

against the government, according to federal court records unsealed in Honolulu.

Walter Glenn Primrose and Gwynn Darle Morrison, both in their late 60s, who allegedly lived for decades under the names Bobby Edward Fort and Julie Lyn Montague, respectively, were arrested Friday in Kapolei on the island of Oahu. Prosecutors are seeking to have the couple held without bail, which could indicate the case is about more than defrauding the government to obtain drivers' licenses, passports and Defense Department credentials. The documents led to Primrose getting secret security clearance with the U.S. Coast Guard and as a defense contractor.

Old photos show the couple wearing uniforms of the KGB, the former Russian spy agency, Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Muehleck said. Faded Polaroids of each in uniform were included in the motion to have them held.

A "close associate" of Morrison said she lived in Romania while it was a Soviet bloc country, Muehleck said.

Prosecutors said there is a high risk the couple would flee if freed. They also suggested that Primrose, who was an avionics electrical technician in the Coast Guard, was highly skilled to communicate secretly if released.

The couple is also believed to have other aliases, Muehleck said.

Lawyers for the couple de-

clined to comment. A bail hearing is scheduled Thursday in U.S. District Court.

John Montague, whose daughter, Julie, died in 1968 at 3 weeks of age, said he was shocked when he heard someone had been living under his daughter's name.

"I still can't believe it happened," Montague, 91, told The Associated Press. "The odds are like one-in-a-trillion that they found her and used her name. People stoop to do anything nowadays. Let kids rest in peace."

Primrose and Morrison were born in 1955 and they attended high school together in Port Lavaca, Texas, and then went to Stephen F. Austin University, according to court records. They married in 1980. □

Strong quake kills 5, injures dozens in northern Philippines

By JIM GOMEZ and AARON FAVILA

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) A strong earthquake set off landslides and damaged buildings in the northern Philippines on Wednesday, killing at least five people and injuring dozens. In the capital, hospital patients were evacuated and terrified people rushed outdoors.

The 7-magnitude quake was centered in a mountainous area of Abra province, said Renato Solidum, the head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, who described the midmorning shaking as a major earthquake.

"The ground shook like I was on a swing and the lights suddenly went out. We rushed out of the office, and I heard screams and some of my companions were in tears," said Michael Brillantes, a safety officer of the Abra town of Lagangilang, near the epicenter.

"It was the most powerful quake I've felt and I thought the ground would open up," Brillantes told The Associated Press by cellphone.

At least five people died mostly in collapsed structures. One villager died



A damaged building lies on its side after a strong quake hit Bangued, Abra province, northern Philippines on Wednesday July 27, 2022.

Associated Press

when hit by falling cement slabs in his house in Abra, where dozens of others were injured. In Benguet province, a worker was pinned to death after a small building that was under construction collapsed in the strawberry-growing mountain town of La Trinidad.

Hundreds of houses and buildings had cracked walls, including some that collapsed in Abra, where President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office

less than a month ago, planned to travel Thursday to meet victims and local officials.

Marcos Jr. told a news conference he was in his office at the riverside Malacanang presidential palace complex when the chandeliers began swaying and making clanking sounds. "It was very strong," he said of the ground shaking.

In a chilling near-death experience, Filipino photojournalist Harley Palangchao

and companions were traveling downhill in two vans in Mountain Province when they suddenly heard thunder-like thuds and saw an avalanche of boulders as big as cars raining down just ahead of them from a towering mountain.

Amid screams of his companions in their van to "back up, back up!" the 44-year-old father of three raised his camera in the front seat and snapped what he feared could be the final pictures of his life.

Hungary's leader rebuked for opposing 'mixed race' society

By The Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP)

— One of Viktor Orban's closest associates has resigned in protest over what she called a "pure Nazi" speech given by the Hungarian prime minister in which he railed against Europe becoming a "mixed race" society.

It was a rare rebuke from within the governing ranks of the Hungarian leader, who has long been accused by the European Union of eroding democratic institutions and norms.

In her resignation letter, published Tuesday by Hun-

garian media, longstanding adviser Zsuzsa Hegedus compared Orban's rhetoric to the language used in Nazi Germany.

"I am sincerely sorry that I have to end a relationship due to such a shameful position," said Hegedus, who worked with Orban for 20 years.

"I was left with no other choice."

While Orban's anti-migration stance and criticism of Western liberal values have long prompted backlash, Saturday's speech sparked a fresh wave of outrage throughout Europe and from the opposition in Hun-



Hungary President Viktor Orban arrives at the NATO Heads of State summit in Madrid, June 30, 2022.

Associated Press

gary. In it, Orban declared that countries with largescale

migration from outside of Europe "are no longer nations." □

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Amnesty: Taliban crackdown on rights is 'suffocating' women

By **RAHIM FAIEZ**

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The lives of Afghan women and girls are being destroyed by a "suffocating" crackdown by the Taliban since they took power nearly a year ago, Amnesty International said in a report released Wednesday.

After they captured the capital, Kabul, in August 2021 and ousted the internationally backed government, the Taliban presented themselves as having moderated since their first time in power, in the 1990s. Initially, Taliban officials spoke of allowing women to continue to work and girls to continue their education.

Instead, they formed an all-male government stacked with veterans of their hard-line rule that has banned girls from attending school from seventh grade, imposed all-covering dress that leaves only the eyes visible and restricted women's access to work.

Amnesty said the Taliban have also decimated protections for those facing domestic violence, detained women and girls for minor violations and contributed to a surge in child marriages. The report also



Afghan women wait to receive cash at a money distribution point organized by the World Food Program, in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Nov. 20, 2021.

Associated Press

documented the torture and abuse of women arrested by the Taliban for protesting against restrictions.

"Taken together, these policies form a system of repression that discriminates against women and girls in almost every aspect of their lives," the report said. "This suffocating crackdown against Afghanistan's female population is increasing day by day."

The group's researchers vis-

ited Afghanistan in March as part of a nine-month-long investigation conducted from September 2021 to June 2022. They interviewed 90 women and 11 girls, between 14 and 74 years-old, across Afghanistan.

Among them were women detained for protesting who described torture at the hands of Taliban guards, including beatings and threats of death.

One woman told Amnes-

ty that guards beat her and other women on the breasts and between the legs, "so that we couldn't show the world." She said one told her, "I can kill you right now, and no one would say anything."

A university student who was detained said she was electrically shocked on her shoulder, face, neck and elsewhere, while the Taliban shouted insults at her. One held a gun at her and told her, "I will kill you, and

no one will be able to find your body."

The report said rates of child, early and forced marriage in Afghanistan are surging under Taliban rule.

The increase, Amnesty said, is fueled by Afghanistan's economic and humanitarian crisis and the lack of education and job prospects for women and girls. The report documented cases of forced marriages of women and girls to Taliban members under pressure by the Taliban member or by the women's families.

One woman from a central province of Afghanistan told Amnesty that she was compelled her to marry off her 13-year-old daughter to a 30-year-old neighbor in exchange for 60,000 Afghanis (around US\$670). She said she felt relieved because her daughter "won't be hungry anymore."

She said she was also considering the same for her 10-year-old daughter but was holding off in hopes the girl could get an education and eventually secure a job to support the family. "Of course, if they don't open the school, I will have to marry her off," she added. □

U.N. experts urge Hong Kong authorities to repeal security law



Photini Pazartzis, Chairperson of the Committee, OHCHR, speaks about the Human Rights Committee presents findings on the political and civil rights in Hong Kong, Macao, Georgia, Ireland, Luxembourg and Uruguay, during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Wednesday, July 27, 2022.

Associated Press

By **JAMEY KEATEN**

GENEVA (AP) — Independent human rights experts backed by the United Na-

tions called Wednesday on authorities in Hong Kong to repeal a national security law that squelched protests

and criticism over China's tightening grip on the semi-autonomous region.

The U.N.-backed Human Rights Committee added its voice to independent advocacy groups that have said the National Security Law was passed by the National People's Congress in Beijing without adequately consulting the people of Hong Kong.

Since its passage in 2020, the law has reportedly been applied in connection with the arrests of more than 200 people, the experts say. The committee aims to ensure that signatories of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights uphold their commitments to respecting people's rights and freedoms.

The findings by the commit-

tee, part of a regular review of parties to the covenant, expose again the complexities of Beijing's control of Hong Kong for the last 25 years. The findings were published Wednesday after a string of hearings including Hong Kong authorities earlier this month.

The Chinese region of Macao, Georgia, Ireland, Luxembourg and Uruguay were also examined.

Hong Kong acceded to the covenant after Britain, the region's former colonial ruler, ratified it in 1976. After the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, Chinese authorities told the U.N. chief that the covenant would continue to apply to the region.

"Hong Kong, China should ensure that the covenant

prevails over local legislation and laws applicable in Hong Kong, including the National Security Law, and bring these laws and practices in full conformity with the Covenant," the experts wrote.

Addressing Hong Kong and not China, which has not ratified the covenant committee vice chair Christopher Arif Bulkan told reporters: "The committee urged Hong Kong to take action to repeal the national security law and in the interim refrain from applying it."

Bulkan cited the "unique" context in which a country like China was in essence inheriting a commitment to the covenant that was made before it took control of Hong Kong and Macao. □

Name and flag of Aruba for the first time in America's Got Talent RCC Aruba qualifies for the second round

Aruba shone bright once again on the international stage with a beautiful presentation by the acrobatics group RCC Aruba, in the much beloved program America's Got Talent (AGT). For the first time, the name of Aruba was heard in the show. The whole island could watch with pride as Aruba's flag waved on a world stage, in a show with a big worldwide audience.

Who is RCC Aruba

RCC Aruba consists of Aruban dancers and Colombian, Cuban and Venezuelan acrobats. Acrobats from various countries who made Aruba their home. Since 2010, RCC Aruba performs in various hotels here on the island.

Minister of Culture, Xiomara Maduro commented that for a long time, RCC Aruba has been promoting our island on the international stage. In 2019, RCC Aruba started taking part in international circus festivals. RCC Aruba participated in China International Circus Festival in 2018, and gave a performance in three different cities. In december 2020, this acrobatics group gave more than 60 presentations in Budapest, Hungary.

In January 2021, RCC Aru-

ba took part in another Circus Festival known around the world, the Budapest Circus Festival in Hungary. Here RCC Aruba won third place and also won a special prize.

RCC Aruba represents Aruba with a lot of love and pride

The minister of Culture highlights that the beauty of these artists is that in every country in which they perform, the group represents the country of Aruba and carries the flag of Aruba with a lot of love and pride. Since the presentation of RCC Aruba in Budapest, this group of artists received contracts at world-renowned circuses.

Currently RCC Aruba is in England taking part in the Summer Circus & Water Spectacular in the Hippodrome Circus in London, England. This is a unique circus, since its stage is surrounded by water.

After their performance in England, they will continue in september with presentations in Italy and in october with presentations in France.

In the name of the Government and the people of Aruba, the minister of Culture thanks each member



of the group RCC Aruba for loving and representing Aruba so beautifully. "Thank you for promoting and for letting Aruba's flag shine on all world stages during your performances. The country of Aruba is very proud of you, and congratulates you with your qualifying for the second round of audition in AGT. You can count with Aruba's support!"





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Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa ranked top 10 Most Romantic Hotels in the Caribbean and Top 25 Best Hotels in the Caribbean by TripAdvisor

EAGLE BEACH - The annual TripAdvisor "Travelers' Choice" Awards have been released for 2022 and Manchebo Beach Resort and Spa has proudly been awarded not one but two awards.

The first award is in the 'Most Romantic Hotels in the Caribbean' category where the intimate boutique resort and spa has been awarded the number 10 position. The second award is in the 'Top 25 Hotels in the Caribbean' category where the resort proudly stands at the number 23 position.



The Travelers' Choice awards honor travelers' favorite destinations, hotels, restaurants, things to do, and beyond, based on the

reviews and opinions collected from travelers and diners around the world on TripAdvisor over a 12-month period. The Travelers'

Choice award was established in 2002 and is the highest honor TripAdvisor can bestow.

Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is an intimate boutique resort of 72 rooms located on majestic Eagle Beach and hosts a high percentage of couples, honeymooners, repeat visitors and beach lovers. These awards are dedicated to our loyal visitors and first-time visitors but most importantly to our hardworking and dedicated staff that works every day to bring the best service to our guests and ensure a memorable experience for years to come. □

New Species of Cone Snail Discovered on Aruba

Researchers from the Florida Atlantic University and University of California recently discovered a new species of cone snail off the coast of Aruba. Inhabiting the shallow waters of Malmok Beach, this species represents only one of over 180 species of mollusks found during a recent field survey, showcasing Aruba as a unique 'evolutionary hot spot' for the region.

Cone snails are predatory sea snails with colorful patterned shells, found throughout the tropics. These sea snails typically inhabit shallow waters, and use a hollow, venom-filled tooth to paralyze their prey. Until fairly recently, the over 600 species of cone snails were all thought to be under one genus, however genetic research has now found that these species are in fact from a number of different genera.

Evolutionary Hot Spot

Aruba's nearshore environment is unique for a number of reasons, one of which is its rich and highly endemic mollusk populations. The high percentage of endemism found around the island indicates that Aruba represents distinctive "evolutionary hot spot" within the

region. In fact, over the course of the one-week field survey, researcher David Berschauer from the University of California found over 180 different species of mollusks on Aruba.

One of these species was later determined to be a new subspecies *Jaspidiconus hendrikae*, named in honor of Hendrika Wendriks, mother of a well-known Aruban diver and amateur malacologist, Jordy Wendriks. This new species can be found along Malmok Beach, an area on the northern tip of Aruba. *Jaspidiconus* species dwell in shallow water, and given their limited dispersal capabilities, often exhibit high degrees of endemism. This new species averages around 14mm in length and is tapered at both ends. Although similar to the species, *J. vantwoudti*, this new species is a vivid yellow color and has tiny rows of brown dots (as can be seen in the image below).

Implications

Globally, tropical marine habitats are being threatened due to coastal development, pollution, overfishing and climate change. This loss of habitat is leading to a cascading affect of rapid species

loss. Although cone snails have historically been overlooked, new studies are uncovering their vast importance. Toxins from a number of cone snails are now gaining recognition for their potential medicinal uses. Already a number of these toxins have been developed and are being used as pain blockers. Protecting the unique biodiversity within the Dutch Caribbean shoreline not only has great ecological value but could contain the key for future scientific breakthroughs in a number of other fields.

Report your sightings

Have you observed Snails or other species? Report your nature sightings and photos on the website DutchCaribbean.Observation.org or download the free apps (iPhone (iObs) & Android (ObsMapp)). Species reports by local communities and tourists are invaluable for nature conservation efforts to help increase public awareness and overall species protection. Besides, DCNA, Observation International and Naturalis Biodiversity Center are working together to develop on automated species identification app for your phone. Your uploaded photos are of great value to make this possible. For questions,



please contact research@DCNA-nature.org

Figure 1. Endemic *Jaspidiconus* species from Aruba. A, B= *Jaspidiconus hendrikae* Petuch & Berschauer, new species, holotype from Malmok Beach, Aruba, length 12.09 mm, LACM 3811; C, D= *Jaspidiconus hendrikae* Petuch & Berschauer, new species, length 10.70 mm, Malmok Beach, Aruba, in the Berschauer research collection; E, F= *Jaspidiconus vantwoudti* Petuch, Berschauer & Poremski, 2015, holotype, length 12.4 mm, Arashi Beach, Aruba; G, H= *Jaspidiconus vantwoudti* Petuch, Berschauer & Poremski, 2015, length 12 mm, Arashi Beach, Aruba. □

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Redirection of tire waste: Starting August 22, tire waste is not allowed at the Parkietenbos landfill

Oranjestad – The Minister of Transport, Integrity, Nature, and Seniors Affairs, Ursell Arends, informed that on August 22, 2022, his ministry would launch the waste redirection plan.

The first type of directed waste is tires. The reasons for choosing tires are that the commercial sector thus far does the waste collection and the urgent need to prevent fires on the Parkietenbos landfill. The Trash 2 Cash forum outcome identified Ecotech and Caretra as companies that can process tires effectively. Effective August 22, 2022, companies and individuals must deposit tire waste at these locations.

On February 22, the Ministry of Nature started the waste

management policy for Aruba. This policy is part of a vision to close the Parkietenbos landfill and focus on waste reduction, reuse, and recycling to facilitate Aruba's transition to the circular economy.

Part of this process is to redirect the different kinds of waste dumped at the Parkietenbos landfill. Then the process of preventing the fires and closing the landfill will start.

The Ministry of Nature and its partners, including the Department of Nature and Environment, will meet with stakeholders on August 3.

They request all companies that deal with tires to contact them at info@trashtocasharuba.org.



They will also launch awareness campaigns to inform the public about the new process to dispose of tire waste.

This implementation of this vision requires the support and understanding of the community and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

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History of fishing in Aruba



ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fishermen is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of

the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil -industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this industry. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Savaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time.

The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fish-



ing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst

garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds.

Most fish caught is used for their own consumption, to feed their families and some are being sold in the market to local restaurants.

Fisherman Gregory Wernet

Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long time and even his grandson Willvion of 7 years old is following his grandfather

steps. This is the sixth generation of fishermen in their family.

They go deep sea fishing. There they catch red snapper, grouper and amberjack. They usually fish for 15 hours a day, but now due to the covid-19 measurements they go fishing from 5 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night or even sometimes from 8 at night till 5 in the morning. The day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gasoline tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small fish known in Aruba as piskechi. They have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have at home.

The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it.

Source: EtniaNativa

Republic of Peru celebrates 201st Independence Day

ORANJESTAD - Today, 28th July 2022, Peru is celebrating its 201st Independence Day. In a telephone interview from Peru, Giovana Tapia-Guzman, Peru's Consular Coordinator in Aruba told us about this great celebration, and also shared a bit regarding her ties to Aruba.

Tapia-Guzman has been living in Aruba for 30 years, doing the work of Consular Coordination for 17 years already. Aruba doesn't have an established Peruvian consulate; when she started in this position, the Consular Coordination was under jurisdiction of the General Consulate of Peru in Venezuela, but because of the crisis in Venezuela, the jurisdiction was changed and now it's under the General Consulate of Peru in Panama.

Every year, the Peruvian community celebrates the 28th of July, Peru's anniversary, one of the biggest celebrations for Peru. This year marks 201 years of independence.

Tapia-Guzman says that for this great day, normally the Peruvian community in Aruba organizes a gastronomic fair. This year, from what Tapia-Guzman understood, a sports group took over the organization of the celebrations. The group consists of Peruvian residents who organize soccer championships, in order to organize a celebration to honor their country.

She explains that normally the Peruvian flag is raised here as well, which the Government of Aruba allows them to do. But because she had to travel to Peru for an emergency this year, she did not receive an invitation for the raising of the Peruvian flag like all the previous years.

The community would normally also organize a mass in honor of Peru, but she

said she was not aware if this was going to take place this year.

It is known that on this special date, Peruvian folklore and cultural groups in Aruba come out to perform cultural dance of this country. The Consular Coordinator explained that in Aruba there are two groups who bring Peruvian culture through various activities in Aruba. One is the Fundacion Fiestas Patrias Peruanos, and the other is Takiri Folklore Peru.

Tapia-Guzman has been in charge of the position of Consular Coordinator for Peru in Aruba for 17 years, and she says that the group Takiri Folklore Peru started practically together with her, incentivizing all Peruvians residing in Aruba to help show more of Peruvian culture in each activity to which they were invited.

Fiestas Patrias Peruanos in Aruba is a new foundation, which also presents traditional dance, and it's a foundation that during the last few years has become very popular in their presentations of Peruvian culture.

As she mentioned above, Tapia-Guzman arrived in Aruba 30 years ago. She said that she first came to Aruba on vacation, and it was during this vacation that she met her future husband, who lived in Aruba back then, and that's how she decided to stay on the island.

Tapia-Guzman studied international commerce and has two children, one of whom is studying in the Netherlands, completing their Masters, and the other is currently studying VWO at Colegio Arubano.

To finalize, Tapia-Guzman sent a message as Peru's Consular Coordinator in Aruba to the entire Peruvian community on the



island. "I invite the entire Peruvian community to always show our education in order that each day we can also have a better life in Aruba. That we can in-

tegrate with the Aruban community, which is ideal for us all to live well, to live in peace, to live in community. And I wish my community, from the distance,

a happy national celebration, that they may show our culture, our gastronomy, in order to motivate the Aruban community to also know Peru."

CROSSWORD

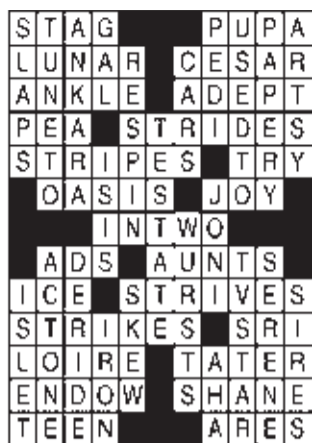
By THOMAS JOSEPH

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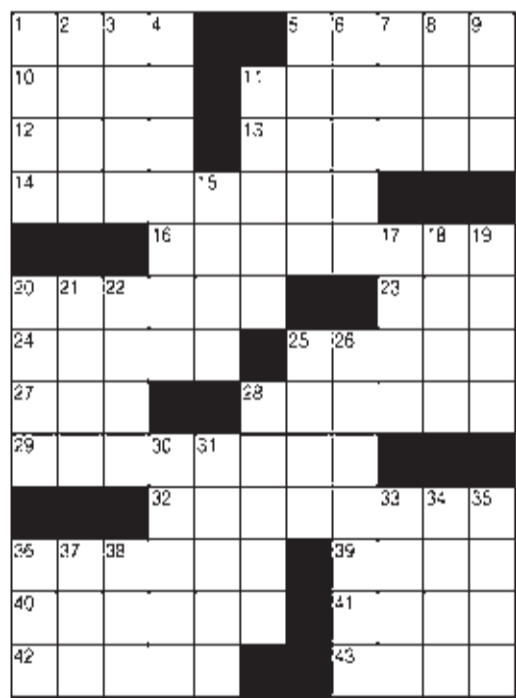
- 1 Went fast
- 5 Hackneyed
- 10 Troubadour's topic
- 11 Singer Estefan
- 12 China setting
- 13 Laceless shoe
- 14 Hotel staffers
- 16 Strapless garments
- 20 Pixie
- 23 Earth: Prefix
- 24 Inclines
- 25 Held power
- 27 Work unit
- 28 Comes to a point
- 29 Cleaning tools
- 32 Street patrollers
- 36 Golf's Palmer
- 39 Neighborhood
- 40 Intones
- 41 Croquet setting
- 42 Hits the sauce
- 43 Different

DOWN

- 1 Thick cut
- 2 Stance
- 3 Wicked
- 4 Bought and sold
- 5 Skiing spot
- 6 Breakfast bread
- 7 Pound sound
- 8 Avoid the truth
- 9 Corn serving
- 11 Geography class aid
- 15 Crude homes
- 17 Lusty look
- 18 July member
- 19 Supplies with turf
- 20 Winter glider
- 21 Andean nation
- 22 Hobo attire
- 25 Captivated
- 26 Posh
- 28 Marsh croakers
- 30 Steak choice
- 31 Liquefies
- 33 Spoken
- 34 Chapel seating
- 35 Reasonable
- 36 Be decisive
- 37 Pi follower
- 38 Catch some Z's



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAXR
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.

7-28

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AGTLYXD AYBS G PNYOXH YX

BSO HGNL YE ZOBON BSGX

AGTLYXD GTIXO YX BSO

TYDSB. — SOTOX LOTTON

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: BLACK CATS WERE CREATED TO GIVE EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE OWNED BY A MINI-PANTHER. — UNKNOWN

Has remote work changed the travel landscape?



In this June 19, 2017, file photo, a person types on a laptop keyboard in North Andover, Mass.

Associated Press

By SAM KEMMIS
NerdWallet

While some workers return to the office this year, many others continue to work remotely indefinitely. This seismic shift has changed where people live and work and, increasingly, how they travel. In the first quarter of 2022, nearly 25% of job postings at the 50,000 largest companies in the U.S. and Canada were for permanently remote positions, according to the job listing service Ladders. That's up from a mere 4% before the pandemic. "It has enabled us to extend trips, leave early and work different hours," says Kirsten Reckman, a credit risk manager based in Tampa, Florida, who works remotely. "My boss is very accommodating as long as the work gets done." Reckman's experience reflects a larger trend. One in five travelers this summer plan to do work on the road, according to a report from Deloitte, an international professional services network. Of these so-called "laptop luggers," 4 in 5 plan to extend the length of their trips because of schedule flexibility.

THE RISE OF 'BLEISURE' TRAVEL

Remote work has blurred the line between business and personal travel. Rather than leaving home rarely for vacation, remote workers can travel at any time. This has the potential to upend longstanding travel

trends. "Many travelers who have the opportunity are choosing to combine remote working with trips for a change of scene as well as maximizing PTO," or paid time off, explains Mark Crossey, traveler expert at Skyscanner, a travel search engine and agency. "Workations allow people with flexible home and work lives to become 'half tourists' for a period of time." This kind of freedom appeals to Lisa Wickstrom, a mortgage underwriter based in Arizona who now works from around the world with only a suitcase. "I got three weeks of vacation before," says Wickstrom, "But I never feel like I have to take vacation time because ... I'm always on vacation."

For the travel industry, these nomads offer enormous opportunities. Remote workers can spend far more time and money at far-flung destinations. Yet "bleisure" travelers don't fit the typical tourist mold.

"You can't just go freely everywhere," explains Derek Midkiff, a patent attorney who left San Diego during the pandemic and never looked back. "You're living somewhere but also working. Someone asks me, 'Did you do this and this,' and I have to say, 'No, I'm working, it's not the same as when you're on vacation.'"

TRAVEL DAYS ARE CHANGING

Before the pandemic, it was expensive to fly on the weekends and cheap-

er during the week. That could all be shifting with remote work.

According to data from Hopper, a travel booking app, the cost of domestic flights on Sundays and Mondays has risen 5.90% and 2.97%, respectively, in 2022 compared to 2019, while the cost of flying on Friday and Saturday has dropped by 3.04% and 1.60%. It's now cheaper to fly on a Saturday than a Monday, on average.

Further, remote workers can take longer trips during busy holidays, flattening the "peak" of peak travel dates. "Since 2020, we've observed a small but noticeable shift toward Thursday departures for Memorial Day weekend itineraries," says Craig Ewer, spokesperson for Google Flights, "which suggests that location flexibility is indeed having an impact on traveler behaviors."

AN INDUSTRY ADAPTS

Many workers fled large cities during the pandemic, filling the suburbs and rural areas. But remote work has changed the calculus more drastically for some, freeing up budgets to allow more travel.

"I save over \$2,000 a month after taxes by living in Florida," says Reckman. "We're traveling a lot more because of that."

Lower cost of living and tax incentives means more freedom for some remote workers. And some companies are seeing a potential windfall.

Airbnb, the vacation rental platform, reports that the number of long-term stays (over 28 days) doubled in the first quarter of 2022 compared to 2019. The company has even introduced an "I'm Flexible" search functionality for travelers who don't need to get back to an office on a specific date.

"I've found Airbnb to be cheaper, and have better rules," says Midkiff, explaining why he chooses vacation rentals over hotels. "And I like to stay a month to get the discount." □

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Cyndi Lauper says 'Kinky Boots' offers hope for a new time

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Three years after it closed on Broadway, the musical "Kinky Boots" returns to New York City. The show may not have changed, but the country has.

The Cyndi Lauper- and Harvey Fierstein-created musical landed on Broadway in 2013 in the middle of the Obama administration, a big hug of acceptance, tolerance and love. It reappears off-Broadway now at Stage 42 as same-sex gains and privacy rights seem under threat.

The Tony- and Olivier-winning musical is about a staid British shoe factory on the brink of ruin that retrofits itself into a maker of footwear for drag queens and embraces its queerness.

Lauper, whose hits include "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "Time After Time," has long been an advocate for the LGBTQ community, starting the non-profit advocacy organization that would become True Colors United in 2008. She also backs abortion rights and just reworked her 1993 song "Sally's Pigeons," which she wrote about a friend who died from a botched abortion.

The Associated Press asked her about the return of "Kinky Boots," so-called cancel culture and the role of artists now that rights are being rolled back. Responses have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: What were your thoughts about bringing "Kinky Boots" back to New



Cyndi Lauper arrives at the 60th annual Grammy Awards at Madison Square Garden in New York, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2018.

Associated Press

York?

LAUPER: I wasn't keen on putting it off-Broadway, but when everyone explained how they felt and what they missed and what was going on, I understood that it's just a place where people could watch a show where not just one person evolves, but everyone evolves.

AP: It does offer a big wet kiss to theatergoers.

LAUPER: I just think it's a wonderful experience and it's inclusive. And, to me, that makes everything a little richer. You know, I never even liked one kind of music. I like music that's exposed to everything. Like cooking. I don't have a bland palate.

AP: Has it stood up?

LAUPER: I could go in there

in a bad mood and it just makes me feel better. And I start laughing. It's just good. It has redemption. It's a story that has redemption. And that's the most important thing. You need to give people hope. You can't take people's hope away.

AP: "Kinky Boots" is all about acceptance and reaching out. Do you worry about the tone of the country now that many seem to be opposed to that sentiment?

LAUPER: Who died and left them in charge of everything? Well, I'll tell you: If you didn't vote, you left them in charge. As soon as you didn't vote, they're in charge. They're changing the laws.

AP: Why did you release a new version of "Sally's Pigeons"?

LAUPER: Because I think that we have forgotten what it was like when "Sally's Pigeons" was a common story. Not a lot of people remember that because they didn't live that.

AP: Do you think the right represents the wishes of most Americans?

LAUPER: In my mind and in my heart, and in the people I have sung to all around this country, Americans are mostly fair-minded people. We have been put to the test with this COVID thing. We had been put to the test with finances. But do you really want to lose your democracy?

AP: What can regular peo-

ple do?

LAUPER: This is what I think: Information is power. Knowledge is power. It's like when I want to find out what the news is, I don't watch one thing. I even try and watch a foreign news station so that I could get what other people looking at my country are saying. I learned that the minute I started traveling outside the country to work.

AP: What do artists do now?

LAUPER: You have to share your stories, and you have to understand that as you want people to listen to you, you've got to listen to what they're saying, too. And then you've got to understand their humanity.

AP: You've mentioned before that you're not a fan of so-called cancel culture. Why?

LAUPER: It's an opportunity when people make a mistake or you don't say the right thing, that you can understand because someone else shares their story and you share yours, and you understand. Your understanding changes. Then people can evolve. Therefore as a country, we can evolve. We can. We can make it better.

AP: So we should keep sharing, keep talking?

LAUPER: Look, sometimes the person you work with for 12 hours a day, they have a different life experience and maybe you share your story together, you can both evolve, right? You can evolve together. And that's what it should be, that we can evolve not cancel each other. □



In this combination of images shows Ken Jennings, left, as he appears at the 2020 ABC Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour in Pasadena, Calif., Jan. 8, 2020, and actress Mayim Bialik as she appears at the 23rd annual Critics' Choice Awards in Santa Monica, Calif., Jan. 11, 2018.

Associated Press

Mayim Bialik, Ken Jennings to split 'Jeopardy!' host job

By **LYNN ELBER**

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Jeopardy!" is giving itself two answers to the question of who gets to host the quiz show — Mayim Bialik and Ken Jennings.

Bialik and Jennings have been serving as rotating hosts since Mike Richards exited the show amid controversy after a short tenure

as the late Alex Trebek's replacement.

Executive producer Michael Davies said in an announcement posted online Wednesday that deals were signed with Bialik and Jennings "to be the hosts of Jeopardy! moving forward."

"In Mayim and Ken, we have two outstanding hosts at the beginning of their

Jeopardy! hosting careers who connect with their own unique fanbases, new fans, and the traditional Jeopardy! viewer," Davies said in the statement.

Jennings, an all-time "Jeopardy!" champion, and actor Bialik ("Call Me Kat," "The Big Bang Theory") were among the guest hosts who filled in after Trebek's death from cancer in 2020. □

Defense matters for Stroman, MLB's top fielding pitchers

By JAY COHEN

CHICAGO (AP) — Marcus Stroman takes pregame grounders at second base and shortstop. He is working with SSK on his own line of gloves, and there are a couple in his Wrigley Field locker in various colors.

He takes his defense seriously especially for a pitcher.

In an age where the focus is on velocity and stuff, pushing fielding even further into the background, Stroman is part of a small but proud group of pitchers mindful of the maybe one or two extra outs they can record per game because of defense.

"Nothing I hate more than a weak-hit ball that dribbles on the infield and ends up being a hit and now you got the guy on first," said Stroman, who signed a \$71 million, three-year contract with the Chicago Cubs last December. "So I'm going all out always to make every play." Stroman's aggressive approach is common among baseball's top fielding pitchers, a group that also includes Atlanta left-hander Max Fried, St. Louis right-hander Adam Wainwright and Kansas City right-hander Zack Greinke, among others. Another common trait is a balanced finish to their motion, leaving the pitcher in position to make the play.



Chicago Cubs starting pitcher Marcus Stroman watches a throw to an Arizona Diamondbacks batter during the first inning of a baseball game in Chicago, Thursday, May 19, 2022.

Associated Press

"I think the biggest thing is you got to want to be involved in that," Mets manager Buck Showalter said. "A lot of guys, you see them almost run away from the ball." Not Stroman. Or Phillies left-hander Ranger Suárez, who leads major league pitchers with five total runs saved, according to The Fielding Bible. Or Aaron Nola, Suárez's teammate in Philadelphia, who tops big league pitchers with six runners caught stealing. "The guys who are the best fielders out there are the ones who usually take it most seriously. In practice also," Wainwright said. "Fielding

is a big part of the game." The 40-year-old Wainwright, a two-time Gold Glove winner, grew up in Georgia, giving him plenty of opportunities to watch one of baseball's best fielding pitchers in Greg Maddux. The Hall of Fame right-hander won a record 18 Gold Gloves during 23 seasons spent mostly with the Braves and Chicago Cubs. "That's who we grew up wanting to be like," Wainwright said. "I tried to model myself after him but not very well. But I tried to." Through Tuesday's games, big league pitchers had committed 191 errors and

recorded a .949 fielding percentage, according to Sportradar. They totaled 312 errors and a .952 fielding percentage last year, compared to 137 errors and a .944 fielding percentage during the shortened 2020 season and 373 errors and a .948 percentage in 2019. Pitchers aren't called on to make that many plays, but their defensive ability can influence the game in other ways. Besides holding runners on and getting over to cover at first, they also can affect how their team positions the rest of its infielders.

"It's definitely an asset," Cubs manager David Ross said. "We have real talks about bunt plays or the threat of a bunt, you don't have to worry about the left side as much."

The 31-year-old Stroman was a pitcher and an infielder when he was growing up in New York. He continued to play the field during his three seasons at Duke. The right-hander was selected by Toronto in the first round of the 2012 amateur draft and won the AL Gold Glove with the Blue Jays in 2017. But he continues to take ground balls in the infield between starts.

"I feel like sometimes pitchers can become robots with throwing techniques," Stroman said, "and going out there and taking ground balls just reminds me that I have that athleticism in there and I need to use it."

The balance he shows on the mound is no accident, either. "In the weight room there's definitely a huge emphasis on balance, stability, single leg," Stroman said. "I do a lot of work in there hoping that it correlates and kind of shows when I'm out on the field." Like so many of his slick-fielding brethren, Stroman also shares an admiration for other pitchers paying close attention to their defense. □

MLB average salary up \$1K after arbitration decisions, deals

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Recent arbitration decisions and settlements have lifted Major League Baseball's average salary by 6% from the start of the 2021 season to \$4,415,275, according to a study by The Associated Press.

When the AP first published the study on April 14, the average was \$4,414,184. At the time, 23 players were eligible for arbitration, so the study used midpoints of the figures submitted by players and teams.

The revision replaced the

midpoints with the figures determined by arbitration panels or agreements that avoided hearings, showing an increase of \$1,091. Teams won nine of 13 cases that went to hearings. Players averaged \$4,167,164 at the start of the 2021 season. The record is \$4,451,508 set in 2017, before the salary slide that angered players during the labor contract that expired last December.

The players' association uses slightly different methodology, and calculated its 2022 opening day average at \$4,467,314.

This year's average would have been a record \$4.62 million had active rosters not been expanded from 26 to 28 through May 1 following the shortened spring training, adding players who are at the \$700,000 minimum or close to it.

The new labor contract's \$50 million bonus pool for lower-salaried players who are not yet eligible for arbitration will boost the final average salary; adding that figure and dropping the added 60 players, the average would be \$4.68 million. □



New York Mets starting pitcher Max Scherzer throws against the Chicago Cubs during the first inning in the second baseball game of a doubleheader in Chicago, Saturday, July 16, 2022.

Associated Press

Disruption now the norm until end of PGA Tour season

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

It's already been a good week for Jason Day and Rickie Fowler before they even hit a shot at the Rocket Mortgage Classic in Detroit.

Both were outside the top 125 in the FedEx Cup standings with only two tournaments left in the PGA Tour's regular season, leaving them in jeopardy of missing out on the postseason. They are exempt through at least next season, so this largely would be a matter of pride, particularly for Day. A former world No. 1, he has never been ineligible for the FedEx Cup playoffs.

But then a memo arrived overnight involving the Saudi-backed LIV Golf se-



Rickie Fowler watches his tee shot on the 11th hole during the second round of the 3M Open golf tournament at the Tournament Players Club in Blaine, Minn., Friday, July 22, 2022.

Associated Press

ries, one that didn't include phrases like "force for good" and "unique energy."

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan informed players their eligibility would not be affected by those playing

in LIV Golf events with their 48-man fields and \$25 million prize funds.

The PGA Tour now has a separate "FedEx Cup Playoffs and Eligibility Points" list to reflect that.

Eight players from the top 125 in the FedEx Cup standings played in the LIV Golf series and were suspended. Two others from the top 125, Jason Kokrak and Charles Howell III, have signed up and will play at Trump National in Bedminster, New Jersey, this week. Day was No. 127 on Sunday. On Tuesday, he was up to No. 119. Fowler went from No. 132 to No. 124. They will move up two more spots when Kokrak and Howell put a ball in play at 1:15 p.m. Friday (still to be determined is which hole in the shotgun start) and are suspended.

Monahan said the separate list ensures "any suspended players will not negatively impact bonus money distributions."

As if the FedEx Cup points system wasn't already challenging, now there are two lists. The "official" FedEx Cup standings still includes the suspended players, from Talor Gooch (No. 20) to Kokrak (No. 41) to Brooks Koepka (No. 102). They still get FedEx Cup bonus money, which is paid out through 150th place.

Gooch currently would stand to get \$640,000, half of it deferred. That might seem like chump change to him. Gooch got more for finishing seventh, two shots behind Jinchiro Kozuma, in the LIV Golf Invitational-Portland three weeks ago.

The new list, approved by the policy board, pays a bonus equal to the amount a player would have earned if the suspended players' points didn't count.

Missing from both lists are players who have resigned, such as Dustin Johnson, Patrick Reed, Louis Oosthuizen and Hudson Swafford.

It's another reminder of how the disruptions never cease, and presumably won't, given as much money as Greg Norman has at his disposal. Based on various reports, LIV Golf has dropped about \$1 billion in signing bonuses already.

It still doesn't have any players from among the top 15 in the world.

That can still change, of course.

Bedminster figures to be the biggest spectacle thus far, held on the course owned by former President Donald Trump, who last week said on his social media platform, Truth Social, that anyone remaining loyal "to the very disloyal PGA" will miss out on the money. He predicted the two circuits eventually would merge.

That seems unlikely as long as Norman is running the show. He keeps throwing around terms like "free agents" while ignoring that most of the players have signed a contract. Graeme McDowell had to skip the Irish Open because it was the same week as a LIV event.

Meanwhile, each month brings twice as many rumors as actual defectors. □

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