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House Republicans make their case for Biden impeachment inquiry at first hearing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans launched a formal impeachment hearing Thursday against President Joe Biden, promising to "provide accountability" as they probe the family finances and lucrative business dealings of his son Hunter and make their case to the public, colleagues and a skeptical Senate.


The chairmen of the Oversight, Judiciary, and Ways and Means committees used the opening hearing to review the constitutional and legal questions involved with impeachment. They are trying to show what they say are links to Biden's son Hunter's overseas businesses, though key witnesses said they do not yet see hard evidence of impeachable offenses.

Rep. James Comer, R-Ky, the Oversight chairman, said the lawmakers have "a mountain of evidence" that will show that the elder Biden "abused his public office for his family's financial gain."




Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer, R-Ky., right, and Ranking Member Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., speak during the House Oversight Committee impeachment inquiry hearing into President Joe Biden, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington. Associated Press

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House Republicans make their case for Biden impeachment inquiry at first hearing

Continued from Front

Comer announced he was issuing subpoenas for additional banking records from Hunter Biden and the president's brother, James Biden. He said the panel will continue to "follow the money and the evidence to provide accountability."

It's a high-stakes opening act for Republicans, taking place just before a potential federal government shutdown, as they begin a process that can lead to the ultimate penalty for a president, dismissal from office for what the Constitution describes as "high crimes and misdemeanors."

The White House pushed back with statements throughout the hearing saying nothing can distract from the Republicans' inability to govern as the shutdown loomed. Spokesperson Sharon Yang called the hearing a "baseless stunt" and said, "President Biden will always stay focused on the priorities of the American people – not these political games."

The more than six-hour hearing came as House Republicans face scattered resistance to an impeachment inquiry from their own ranks and deep reluctance in the Senate from Republicans who worry about political ramifications and say Biden's conviction and removal from office is unlikely.

As the hearing began, Democrats displayed a screen showing the days, hours and minutes left until the government shuts down as Congress struggles to fund the government before Saturday's deadline.

"We're 62 hours away from shutting down the government of the United States of America and Republicans are launching an impeachment drive, based on a long debunked and discredited lie," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, the top Democrat on the Oversight panel.

Raskin questioned the legitimacy of the hearing since the House has not voted to formally launch the impeachment inquiry. He said Republicans are rehashing



Rep. Kweisi Mfume, D-Md., points to a countdown clock with the time left before a government shutdown, during a House Oversight Committee impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

five-year-old allegations raised by Donald Trump, who is Biden's chief rival in 2024, during the former president's 2019 impeachment over Ukraine.

"They don't have a shred of evidence against President Biden for an impeachable offense," he said.

The hearing Thursday did not feature witnesses with information about the Bidens or Hunter Biden's business. Instead, the panel heard from outside experts in tax law, criminal investigations and constitutional legal theory.

A top Republican-called witness, Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University law professor who is an expert in impeachment issues, said he believed the House had passed the threshold for an inquiry but that the current evidence was not enough for charges.

"I do not believe that the current evidence would support articles of impeachment," Turley said.

Democrats, who decry the investigation as a political ploy aimed at hurting Biden and helping Trump as he runs again for president, brought in Michael Gerhardt, a law professor who has also appeared as an expert in previous impeachment proceedings. In detailing the reasons

Republicans say they have to impeach Biden, Gerhardt concluded: "If that's what exists, as a basis for this inquiry, it is not sufficient. I say that with all respect."

Still, questions remain as Republicans dig into the Biden family finances and the overseas business dealings of Hunter Biden, who has acknowledged being a drug user during much of the time under scrutiny. The president's brother, James, was also involved in some work with Hunter.

Republicans have been investigating Hunter Biden for years, since his father was vice president. And while there have been questions raised about the ethics around the family's international business, none of the evidence so far has proven that the president, in his current or previous office, abused his role, accepted bribes or both.

One former business partner of Hunter Biden has told House investigators the son was selling the "illusion of access" to his father.

Turley told the lawmakers the question remains, "Was the president involved?"

In the run-up to the hearing, Republicans unveiled a tranche of new documents and bank records that detail

wire transfers from a Chinese businessman to Hunter Biden in 2019. Hunter Biden had listed his father's address on the wire transfer form, which Republicans say provided a clear link to the president. Abbe Lowell, an attorney for Hunter Biden, said the address on the wire transfer, which he says was a loan, was listed to the president's Delaware home because it was the address on Hunter Biden's driver's license and "his only permanent address at the time."

"Once again Rep. Comer peddles lies to support a premise — some wrongdoing by Hunter Biden or his family — that evaporates in thin air the moment facts come out," Lowell said in a statement.

House Republicans are also looking into the Justice Department investigation into Hunter Biden's taxes and gun use that began in 2018. Two IRS whistleblowers came forward to Congress in the spring with claims that department officials thwarted their efforts to fully investigate Hunter Biden and that they faced retaliation when they pushed back.

The claims have since been disputed by the Department of Justice, the IRS and FBI agents who worked on the

case.

"The Biden Justice Department protected the Biden family brand," said Rep. Jason Smith, a Missouri Republican and Ways and Means chairman.

What Smith did not mention was that the discussions occurred during the Trump Justice Department and were likely in keeping with the agency's practice of avoiding overt investigative steps concerning political candidates in the immediate run-up to an election.

But Republicans have pointed to a failed plea deal over the summer as proof that Hunter Biden received preferential treatment because of who his father was.

"They tried to put together this sweetheart deal," said Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, the Judiciary chairman.

The impeachment inquiry hearing is taking place as the federal government is days away from what is likely to be a damaging government shutdown that would halt paychecks for millions of federal workers and the military and disrupt services for millions of Americans.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy announced the impeachment inquiry this month egged on by Trump and with mounting pressure from his right flank to take action against Biden or risk being ousted from his leadership job.

Trump is the only president to be twice impeached, first over accusations he pressured Ukraine to dig up dirt on Biden and later over accusations that he incited the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol. He was acquitted in both cases by the Senate.

The hearing Thursday is expected to be the first of many as House Republicans explore whether or not they will pursue articles of impeachment against the president.

It's unclear if McCarthy has support from his slim Republican majority to impeach Biden. If Biden was impeached, the charges would then be sent to the Senate for a trial. □

Menendez's indictment means a new Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman and policy reviews

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said Thursday he is considering policy changes toward Egypt, Turkey and other countries as he took over the powerful leadership of the panel, replacing indicted Sen. Bob Menendez.

Sen. Ben Cardin, a veteran Maryland Democrat, will have an abbreviated term leading the committee because his term expires in January 2025 and he is not seeking reelection. He described his unexpectedly inheriting the chairmanship, with its power to help shape how the United States approaches the rest of the world, as a "pinch yourself" moment.

Cardin spoke to reporters under the chandelier and vaulted ceiling of the historic 19th-century committee room on his first full day



Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., talks to reporters as he holds Pen and Pad on assuming chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023. Associated Press

on the job.

Menendez was indicted on Sept. 22 on charges he and his wife, Nadine, accepted bribes including cash and gold bars in transactions

that included using his position as committee chairman to influence some U.S. policy decisions in favor of Egypt's autocratic government.

The indictment alleges that included helping Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government overcome human-rights restrictions limiting a small portion

of what is more than \$1 billion in annual U.S. military aid to Egypt.

Menendez and his wife have pleaded not guilty. Cardin, before becoming chairman, had condemned the Biden administration's decision this year to override a human-rights prohibition on \$235 million of this year's military aid to Egypt.

The administration cited national security interests for waiving the human rights restrictions. That was even though the State Department acknowledged Egypt had made no progress on detaining journalists, writers and rights advocates and other human rights abuses. Asked Thursday if he intended to stop the distribution of that money if it could still be stopped, Cardin said he was "looking at his options." He said he wanted to give the administration and some lawmakers a hearing on the issue before reaching a final decision. □

National Security Agency is starting an artificial intelligence security center

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Security Agency is starting an artificial intelligence security center a crucial mission as AI capabilities are increasingly acquired, developed and integrated into U.S. defense and intelligence systems, the agency's outgoing director announced Thursday.

Army Gen. Paul Nakasone said the center would be incorporated into the NSA's Cybersecurity Collaboration Center, where it works with private industry and international partners to harden the U.S. defense-industrial base against threats from adversaries led by China and Russia.

"We maintain an advantage in AI in the United States today. That AI advantage should not be taken for granted," Naka-

son said at the National Press Club, emphasizing the threat from Beijing in particular.

Asked if the U.S. has detected either Russia or China trying to influence the 2024 U.S. presidential

elections, Nakasone said, "We haven't seen that yet." He noted that a number of elections will take place around the world before that and said the U.S. would work with partners and allies to help deter

any such efforts. Nakasone was asked about using AI to automate the analysis of threat vectors and red-flag alerts and he reminded the audience that U.S. intelligence and defense agencies already use AI.

"AI helps us, But our decisions are made by humans. And that's an important distinction," Nakasone said. "We do see assistance from artificial intelligence. But at the end of the day, decisions will be made by humans and humans in the loop."

The AI security center's establishment follows an NSA study that identified securing AI models from theft and sabotage as a major national security challenge, especially as generative AI technologies emerge with immense transformative potential for both good

and evil.

Nakasone said it would become "NSA's focal point for leveraging foreign intelligence insights, contributing to the development of best practices guidelines, principles, evaluation, methodology and risk frameworks" for both AI security and the goal of promoting the secure development and adoption of AI within "our national security systems and our defense industrial base."

He said it would work closely with U.S. industry, national labs, academia and the Department of Defense as well as international partners.

Nakasone is to be succeeded as dual leader of the NSA and U.S. Cyber Command by Air Force Lt. Gen. Timothy Haugh, his current deputy. □



U.S. Cyber Command Commander Gen. Paul Nakasone testifies before the House Armed Services Subcommittee hearing on cyberspace operations, on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 30, 2023.

Associated Press

Muscogee Nation judge rules in favor of citizenship for slave descendants known as freedmen

By **SEAN MURPHY**

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A judge for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma ruled in favor of citizenship for two descendants of Black slaves once owned by tribal members, potentially paving the way for hundreds of other descendants known as freedmen. District Judge Denette Mouser, based in the tribe's headquarters in Okmulgee, ruled late Wednesday in favor of two Black Muscogee Nation freedmen, Rhonda Grayson and Jeff Kennedy, who had sued the tribe's citizenship board for denying their applications.

Mouser reversed the board's decision and ordered it to reconsider the applications in accordance with the tribe's Treaty of 1866, which provides that descendants of those listed on the Creek Freedmen Roll are eligible for tribal citizenship.

Freedman citizenship has been a difficult issue for tribes as the U.S. reckons with its history of racism. The Cherokee Nation has



Plaintiff Rhonda Grayson speaks outside of the Muscogee Nation court building after a hearing challenging the Muscogee citizenship board on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022, in Okmulgee, Okla.

Associated Press

granted full citizenship to its freedmen, while other tribes, like the Muscogee Nation, have argued that sovereignty allows tribes to make their own decisions about who qualifies for citizenship.

Muscogee Nation Attorney General Geri Wisner said in a statement that the tribe

plans to immediately appeal the ruling to the Muscogee Nation's Supreme Court.

"We respect the authority of our court but strongly disagree with Judge Mouser's deeply flawed reasoning in this matter," Wisner said. "The MCN Constitution, which we are duty-bound

to follow, makes no provisions for citizenship for non-Creek individuals. We look forward to addressing this matter before our Nation's highest court."

Tribal officials declined to comment further.

The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole na-

tions were referred to historically as the Five Civilized Tribes, or Five Tribes, by European settlers because they often assimilated into the settlers' culture, adopting their style of dress and religion, and even owning slaves. Each tribe also has a unique history with freedmen, whose rights were ultimately spelled out in separate treaties with the U.S.

Mouser pointed out in her decision that slavery within the tribe did not always look like slavery in the South and that slaves were often adopted into the owner's clan, where they participated in cultural ceremonies and spoke the tribal language.

"The families later known as Creek Freedmen likewise walked the Trail of Tears alongside the tribal clans and fought to protect the new homeland upon arrival in Indian Territory," Mouser wrote. "During that time, the Freedmen families played significant roles in tribal government including as tribal town leaders in the House of Kings and House of Warriors." □

Plane that crashed, killing Rep. Peltola's husband, had over 500 pounds of meat and antlers on board

By **BECKY BOHRER**

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — A small plane that crashed in rural Alaska earlier this month, killing the husband of U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola, was carrying more than 500 pounds of moose meat and antlers from a remote hunting camp when it went down shortly after takeoff, according to an investigation report released Thursday.

Eugene Peltola Jr., 57, was the only person aboard the plane that crashed Sept. 12 about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northeast of the small western Alaska community of St. Mary's. He was found conscious but died at the scene, the initial report from

the National Transportation Safety Board states.

A final report with probable

cause findings could take up to two years, the NTSB has said.



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of Calif., left, administers the House oath of office to Rep. Mary Peltola, D-Alaska, standing next to her husband Eugene "Buzzy" Peltola Jr., center, during a ceremonial swearing-in on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2022.

Associated Press

According to the report, two days before the crash, Peltola took five hunters, a guide and equipment from Holy Cross to a site about 80 miles (129 kilometers) northwest of the community, where the group set up camp next to a landing strip. The plan was for the group to hunt for moose and have it taken back to Holy Cross. On Sept. 11, the group got a moose and made plans with Peltola, via satellite messaging devices, for him to transport the meat the next day.

The day of the crash, Peltola picked up one load of meat and returned to the area for the second load. One of the hunters estimated there were 50-70 more

pounds of meat in this load than the initial one. Peltola strapped antlers to the right wing strut, the report states. Peltola and one of the hunters talked about the weather and wind, which was "intermittently variable and gusting," and Peltola was told the gusts were stronger at the departure end of the airstrip, according to the report. Just two hunters were at the site when the accident happened, and they rendered aid to Peltola after the crash, said Clint Johnson, chief of the Alaska region for the NTSB. The rest of the party had been flown out earlier, although Johnson didn't have further details about their departure. □

EU struggles to update asylum laws three years on from a sweeping reform. And the clock is ticking

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Three years after unveiling a plan for sweeping reform of the European Union's outdated asylum rules, government ministers struggled on Thursday to overcome yet another obstacle to putting the new system in place, fueling doubt as to whether it will ever see the light of day.

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum was touted as the answer to the EU's migration woes when it was made public in September 2020. The 27-nation bloc's old rules collapsed in 2015 after well over 1 million people arrived in Europe without authorization. Most were fleeing war in Syria or Iraq.

But little progress was made on the pact as the member states bickered over which country should take charge of migrants when they arrive and whether other countries should be obligated to help.

That riddle was solved, at least temporarily, in June. The plan is held up now over a "crisis regulation"



Dozens of people from all over the world line in front of the central registration center for asylum seekers in Berlin, Germany, Monday, Sept. 25, 2023.

Associated Press

laying out extraordinary measures that could be taken in the event of a massive, unforeseen movement of migrants. It would involve setting up processing centers on the EU's outside borders where people would be screened when they arrive and include the option to detain people until their asylum

claims are assessed. But the clock is ticking on the whole deal. Elections will be held across the EU in June. For the pact to get through, officials and lawmakers say, an agreement on all 10 parts of the plan must be sealed by February. A new European Commission and European Parliament will start work

next year and they may want to modify the pact, raising the risk that it might unravel.

"It's not just the crisis regulation, it's about the whole pact," Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska warned his EU counterparts as he chaired their meeting in Brussels. The European Parliament

must endorse the asylum plan, and lawmakers are blocking talks on parts of it until progress is made.

"There's still a lot of technical and political work to be done" in talks with the lawmakers, said Grande-Marlaska, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency. "Negotiations on outstanding, sensitive issues are now on hold and this is of great concern to us." Not only will there be new institutions. Hungary and Poland, which have nationalist and anti-migrant governments, will each take over the bloc's presidency for six months, starting with Budapest in July, then Warsaw in January 2025. Presidencies help set the EU's working priorities. Hungary and Poland vetoed an EU summit statement in late June after they were outvoted on other parts of the pact. They show no sign that they will back down.

"We have to take a decision based on consensus," Hungarian Deputy Interior Minister Bence Rétvári said. Hungary opposes the use of majority voting. □

Dutch police say 3 people are killed in shootings at a university hospital and home in Rotterdam

By MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A lone gunman wearing a bulletproof vest opened fire in an apartment and a hospital in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam on Thursday, killing three people, including a 14-year-old girl, police said. The shooting sent patients and medics fleeing the Erasmus Medical Center in downtown Rotterdam, including some who were wheeled out of the building in beds. Others barricaded themselves into rooms and stuck hand-written signs to windows to show their location.

Police Chief Fred Westerbeke told reporters that the

shooter was a 32-year-old student from Rotterdam. He was arrested at the hospital carrying a firearm. His identity was not released, and the motive for the shootings

was still under investigation. He first shot and killed a 39-year-old woman and seriously injured her 14-year-old daughter at an apartment close to where the

suspect lived, Police Chief Fred Westerbeke said. Police said the girl later died of her injuries.

The shooter then went to the nearby Erasmus Medical Center where he shot and killed a 43-year-old man, a teacher at the academic hospital, police said. He also started fires at the scenes of both shootings. The identities of the victims were not released.

The suspect was cooperating with police, Westerbeke said. "It was a black day," said Rotterdam Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb.

Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima expressed their sympathy on social media. "Our hearts go out to the family

and friends of the victims of the violence this afternoon in Rotterdam," the royal pair wrote. "We also think of everybody who lived in fear during these terrible actions," they added.

The Erasmus Medical Center appealed on social media for people not to go to the hospital, but later said it was reopening. It said that all appointments scheduled for Friday would go ahead as planned. There have been scores of small explosions and at homes and businesses across Rotterdam this year, blamed on rival drug gangs. There was no immediate suggestion that Thursday's shooting was linked to the feuding drug gangs. □



Emergency services attend to the scene at Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, Thursday Sept. 28, 2023.

Associated Press

Rising poverty grips Argentina as runaway inflation takes its toll

By DÉBORA REY
Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — With tired faces, residents of a homeless shelter in Argentina's capital pass through the main entrance and line up to receive a hot drink and a slice of cake for an afternoon snack.

Places like the Bepo Ghezzi Social Inclusion Center in the Parque Patricios neighborhood of Buenos Aires have seen demand soar as more people are struggling to make ends meet amid an annual inflation rate above 100%.

The portion of Argentines living in poverty reached 40.1% in the first six months of the year, according to figures released Wednesday by the government's INDEC statistics agency. That is up from 39.2% in the second half of 2022.

"I was renting, and it increased. I couldn't afford it," said Lionel Pais, 37, who arrived at the shelter three weeks ago, just after the government devalued the Argentine peso almost 20%, setting off another surge in prices. "These sudden increases that occurred, the economic situation in the



Homeless people sleep on a sidewalk in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Wednesday, early Sept. 27, 2023.

Associated Press

country, don't allow me to cover basic expenses." For much of the 20th century, Argentina showed a social mobility dynamic that gave rise to a large middle class and made the country stand out in the region. But the good times derailed, and poverty has remained firmly above 25% the last two decades as

the South American country stays mired in economic malaise. Prices soared 124.4% during the 12-month period through Aug. 31. Sebastián Boned, 26, found himself calling the assistance hotline for people experiencing homelessness when his wages as a hotel receptionist no longer allowed him to cover the

80,000 pesos (\$218) he paid to live in a boarding house. "It's a peaceful place," he said of the shelter. But the clock for Boned, and all of the shelter's other residents, is ticking. These shelters guarantee housing for only three months. During that time, residents are given guidance on finding work and applying for a

subsidy to help them with their rent.

"Most of them tell you their salary doesn't cover their needs," said Mercedes Vucassovich, a social worker who runs the Bepo Ghezzi center.

The median monthly income in Argentina was 87,310 pesos (\$237) during the second quarter of the year, according to INDEC. A typical family needs more than 280,000 pesos (\$765) to stay out of poverty.

In Morón, a suburb west of the capital, María de los Ángeles García and Adrián Viñas Coronel, along with their five children aged 3 months to 13 years, are renting a makeshift dwelling in a low-income neighborhood after spending six months on the streets. With an address, they can enroll their children in a public school.

Their only fixed income is about 90,000 pesos (\$245) a month in social assistance, of which they have to allocate 25% to rent.

"We have to work all day on the street because we don't have enough for food nor diapers for the kids," said García, 31. □

Burkina Faso's junta says its intelligence and security services have foiled a coup attempt

By CHINEDU ASADU
Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) —

Burkina Faso's military government said Wednesday its intelligence and security services had thwarted a coup attempt and were actively pursuing others believed involved in what it called a bid to "throw our country into chaos."

A junta statement said the coup attempt happened Tuesday without providing further details.

"Officers and other alleged actors involved in this attempt at destabilization have been arrested and others are actively sought," junta spokesman Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo said in the statement.

Burkina Faso is one of a growing list of West African countries where the military has taken power, accusing the elected governments of failing to keep their promises. The current junta seized power in September 2022 by ousting the military regime of Lt. Col. Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba about eight months after it staged a coup to remove democratically elected President Roch Marc Kaboré.

Capt. Ibrahim Traore was named as the transitional president.

However, since its inception, the junta has struggled to end Burkina Faso's security challenges the very reason that it said prompted it to take over power in

September 2022.

Ouedraogo said an investigation into the attempted takeover was underway and that those behind it had sought to cast Burkina Faso "into chaos."

The announcement came a day after protesters marched in Ouagadougou, the nation's capital, expressing support for the transitional government.

The junta's statement praised citizens "for their resolute and historic commitment to defending the Homeland and protecting it against all those who want to take us backwards into history." It also commended "the patriotic action and the high sense of duty" of the defense and

security forces that thwarted the coup.

The transitional government is running Burkina Faso under a constitution

approved by a national assembly that included army officers, civil society groups and traditional and religious leaders. □



Burkina Faso coup leader Capt. Ibrahim Traore participates in a ceremony in Ouagadougou, Oct. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

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

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

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

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



Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

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

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank

of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs

that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

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

25 florin
On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called *Shoshoro*. The birds *Trupiaal*, *Shoco*, rock drawings, and the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a *Purun di ceramica* (clay pot), in

reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

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

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

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

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

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





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

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

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

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

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

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The en-



emies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day

until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

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

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

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

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

Unique fauna of Aruba

çao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

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

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

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigro-nuchalis*)

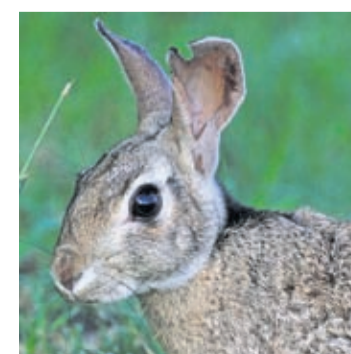
The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in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

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rab-

bit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

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

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



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Add a visit to Ostrich Farm's Farmers Market to your calendar!

Every first Sunday of the month the Ostrich Farm organizes and facilitates the largest farmers market on the island. Everything sold during the farmers market are locally crafted, produced and grown. Locally artisans and farmers gather at the farmers market to showcase proudly their products.

You can find the best artisan bread & pastries from T2 Pan, hot sauces from Nonna, jams, cooking sauces, fresh egg and honey that comes from small beekeepers, vegetarian snacks from locally soured beans call Dubarú. Then you have the very talented local artisans that share their unique and one-of-a-kind art such as driftwood paintings, high quality jewelry, baby clothing, knitting products, ceramic mugs/cups and plates, Calabash art, organic soap and cosmetic from Bath &

Body and Eco living and so much more!

The Farmer's market is held under a large, covered area so you can shop comfortably in the shade. The restaurant in the premises serves delicious local lunches and fresh fish when available. Ice cold local beer, smoothies, fresh fruit shakes and not to be missed serves the best shaved ice on the island! And the Ostrich tours is of course offered as well.

For everybody young and old here is something to do, shop, relax and enjoy a great family outing and most of all come and support the local artisans and farmers every first Sunday of the month from 10:00 to 14:00, Matividiri 57, follow our facebookpage or Instagram @arubaostrichfarm and be notified for each upcoming farmers market



Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

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

many years.

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

the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

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

While the natural bridge no longer is functional,



Current state of the Natural Bridge

there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge".



The Baby Natural Bridge



The Natural Bridge pre-collapse

Episode 58: Quiripa, Indian button, Dutch pipes, fish bones and shells



Since prehistoric times many things were used to make jewelry and ornaments. The existence of man and his participation in the manufacture of tribal objects was spiritually essential. The purpose of these objects was to give a sense of distinction. Since ancient times there was an incessant demand to satisfy the social group's request.

These artistic creations worked as a medal of bravery for a warrior, as a symbol of recognition and also as a magic totem for shamans and clan leaders, a talisman to drive away omens and bad spells. Others promoted physical recuperation or spiritual healing and spread powers of body cleansing. However, they were always consid-

ered as symbols of political status and valued as a commercial article.

In Aruba, fish bones, sea shells and feathers were used to make these types of objects but only a few kind of white seashell were considered in the fabrication of quiripa. Quiripa's were mostly circular in shape and had a central perforation were a string could be passed through. This was in order to make chokers or necklaces in a wide variety of sizes and shapes. Diameter of a single quiripa could be from 2mm while other could be as big as 10 cm.

During one of many expeditions we held, accompanied by late Dutch Archeologist Dr. Eb Boerstra we had stumbled upon a

place were broken Strombus shells were abundant. Strombus shells were often used for the manufacturing of various decorative and ceremonial ornaments. Some of the elaborated Strombus shells that we have discovered were zoomorphic in shape. One was in the form of daggers and some had one or more perforations, while others were not yet finished or drilled. Contemporary Aruban natives calls the circular made Strombus shell, "boton di Indjan" because of their similarity to clothing buttons.

These shell buttons or quiripa were found in large numbers during an archaeological rescue excavation in the Santa Cruz district of Aruba. They should know that Santa Cruz was a very important settlement during the Aruba Ceramic Period and a highly organized community.

The remarkable thing is that different cultures from around the world continue to use these objects with the similar purposes with which our ancestors used to do it.

We also know that the land shells of the Bulimulus snail genus were used by the natives of Texas to make necklaces; Stillman Berry, an American marine zoologist, records a necklace of land shells of the Oreohelix yavapai species made by Javasupai natives from the Coconino county in Arizona.

These types of land shells are difficult to obtain and are even more delicate to



work into jewelry.

On the island of Pascua or Easter Island in Chile, its inhabitants are reminded of Polynesian customs and when they say goodbye to their acquaintances they do so by giving them a shell necklace that recalls the lei garland of the Hawaiians.

In Africa the Wodaabe produce bracelets with Cypraea shells and in Mauritania the shells are used as jewelry by women.

The shells have been and continue to be inspirational objects for handicrafts since the time of the Incas and Egyptians.

After the arrival of Europeans other materials were incorporated in their elaborations of jewelry, like glazed ceramic fragments, glass and tubular fragments of white or red ceramic Tabaco pipes and Dutch Gouda pipes. These broken pipe parts were used as for beats in pen-

dants and bracelets. These were already perforated, since the pipe air intake served as an easily string pass through.

In 1985 during an intern archaeological field expedition a great quantity of broken Dutch pipes were discovered at Wela, a place situated east of Frenchman pass. Many broken fragments of these small tubular shaped ceramic pipes were found just on the surface of the land and some still had the tabaco holding cavity in tack. A complete necklace made out of Dutch pipes was found. These pipes were common in places that functioned as trade settlements with native communities. Many of these pipes were also found around Alto Vista Chapel area at the Northside of the island and many other places of the island. Natives knew very well how to use, reuse or recycle everything they had and produced almost no waste at all. □



Article by: Etnia Nativa
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Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins



According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Anto-

nio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife

Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteenth century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the

custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel



there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

Visit the island's hidden natural pools

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two "hidden" natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known "Cura di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and re-

ceive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!



Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type



of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder.

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

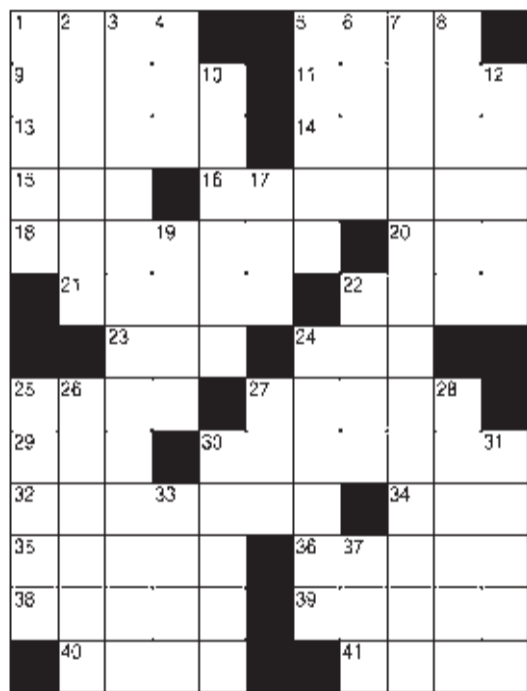
ACROSS 38 Pretend
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5 Night fliers
9 Field units
11 Skilled
13 Hack-neyed
14 2014 Winter Games site
15 Load unit
16 Like a cardinal
18 Fancy homes
20 Smelter supply
21 "Grace-land" singer
22 Some bills
23 Negative link
24 Avril follower
25 Farm litter
27 Link up
29 Band booster
30 Sawbuck
32 Sicilian port
34 John, in Jersey
35 Banded rock
36 All set



DOWN

1 Barista's creation
2 Clue heading
3 Inked item
4 Deter-mined
5 Diamond corners
6 Fusses
7 Shifting thing
8 Bubble, e.g.
10 District
12 Ocean's motions
17 Stimp'y's pal
19 Singer
22 Stable diet
24 They're underage
25 Vatican-based
26 Sights
27 Clothes line
28 Sweatshirt type
30 Pollster's find
31 Trifled
33 School on the Thames
37 Corn spike

Yesterday's answer



A X Y D L B A A X R
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.

9-29

CRYPTOQUOTE

S R S H J K B F M W , K M H J K G J

F G B K , I L J E S N W B O T H E J J F M T J

F G M H S E I , T B A S E T B A J T K F

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I DO THINGS LIKE GET IN A TAXI AND SAY, "THE LIBRARY, AND STEP ON IT." — DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

Netflix's DVD-by-mail service bows out as its red-and-white envelopes make their final trip



Netflix's first CEO, Marc Randolph, poses outside the Santa Cruz, California, post office in May, 2022, where he had mailed a Patsy Cline CD to the company's co-founder Reed Hastings, to test whether a disc could make it through the mail.

Associated Press

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Technology Writer

The curtain is finally coming down on Netflix's once-iconic DVD-by-mail service, a quarter century after two Silicon Valley entrepreneurs came up with a concept that obliterated Blockbuster video stores while providing a springboard into video streaming that has transformed entertainment.

The DVD service that has been steadily shrinking in the shadow of Netflix's video streaming service will shut down after its five remaining distribution centers in California, Texas, Georgia and New Jersey mail out their final discs Friday.

The fewer than 1 million recipients who still subscribe to the DVD service will be able to keep the final discs that land in their mailboxes. "It's sad," longtime Netflix DVD subscriber Amanda Konkle said Thursday as she waited the arrival for her final disc, "The Nightcom-

ers," a 1971 British horror film featuring Marlon Brando. "It makes me feel nostalgic. Getting these DVDs has been part of my routine for decades."

Some of the remaining DVD diehards will get up to 10 discs as a going away present to loyal customers such as Konkle, 41, who has watched more than 900 titles since signing up for the service in 2006. In hopes of being picked for the 10 DVD giveaway, Konkle set up her queue to highlight for more movies starring Brando and older films that are difficult to find on streaming.

At its peak, the DVD boasted 16 million subscribers who could choose from more than 100,000 titles stocked in the Netflix library.

But in 2011, Netflix made the pivotal decision to separate the DVD side business from a streaming business that now boasts 238 million worldwide subscribers and generated \$31.5

billion in revenue year. The DVD service, in contrast, brought in just \$146 million in revenue last year, making its eventual closure inevitable against a backdrop of stiffening competition in video streaming that has forced Netflix to whittle expenses to boost its profits.

"It is very bittersweet," said Marc Randolph, Netflix's CEO when the company shipped its first DVD, "'Beetlejuice,'" in April 1998.

"We knew this day was coming, but the miraculous thing is that it didn't come 15 years ago."

Although he hasn't been involved in Netflix's day-to-day operations for 20 years, Randolph came up with the idea for a DVD-by-service in 1997 with his friend and fellow entrepreneur, Reed Hastings, who eventually succeeded him as CEO a job Hastings held until stepping aside earlier this year.

Back when Randolph and Hastings were mulling the concept, the DVD format was such a nascent technology that there were only about 300 titles available at the time.

In 1997, DVDs were so hard to find that when they decided to test whether a disc could make it through the U.S. Postal Service that Randolph wound up slipping a CD containing Patsy Cline's greatest hits into a pink envelope and dropping it in the mail to Hastings from the Santa Cruz, California post office. Randolph paid just 32 cents for the stamp to mail that CD, less than half the current cost of 66 cents for a first-class stamp.

Netflix quickly built a base of loyal movie fans while relying on a then-novel monthly subscription model that allowed customers to keep discs for as long as they wanted without facing the late fees that Blockbuster imposed for tardy returns. □

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TikTok videos promoting steroid use have millions of views, says report criticized by the company

By **HALELUYA HADERO**
Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — TikTok has become a key marketing channel for vendors promoting steroids and other bodybuilding drugs to millions of the app's users, according to a report released Thursday that the social media company disputes.

In the study, the nonprofit Center for Countering Digital Hate says popular videos encouraging use of the products for aesthetic or athletic gain are being posted by influencers who often downplay the risks associated with them. It follows a warning issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in April about performance-enhancing drugs being marketed to teenagers and young adults on social media platforms.

"They're being marketed to young men by influencers who are deliberately saying, 'If you want to be like Captain America, you've got to take these drugs,'" CCDH founder and CEO Imran Ahmed said. The findings from the study show TikTok videos under certain hashtags promoting what researchers called "steroid-like drugs" have racked up more than 587 million views in the U.S. during the past three years, with 72% of those views coming from users aged 18 to 24. The report also alleges that several dozen influencers promoted websites that sold the drugs either directly or through affiliate marketing schemes that could allow them to benefit from sales.



The TikTok logo is seen on a mobile phone in front of a computer screen which displays the TikTok home screen, Saturday, March 18, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

TikTok spokesperson Ben Rathe criticized the report, saying the group's methodology doesn't distinguish between harmful videos and positive content that talks about recovery from steroids or their side effects. It's not possible for the CCDH to know that based on the type of data they're presenting and sheer volume of videos that are on TikTok, he said. Researchers said they assessed the top 20 videos under some hashtags, and all of those under other hashtags that contained fewer than 20 videos.

The information for the report came from TikTok's publicly available Creative Center tool. Researchers

were unable to measure how many times users under 18 came across such content since the company does not provide that information. Ahmed said in an interview that his group has asked TikTok to make that type of data available for assessment.

Similar to Instagram, TikTok has a large fitness community made up of users who talk about various things, including exercise and steroid use. Popular videos posted on the app speculate on who's "natty or not," or who's naturally fit or taking steroids. The study looked at content associated with three classes of drugs: anabolic-androgenic steroids, or synthetic

hormones that mimic the effects of testosterone; peptides that simulate the release of human growth hormones and aid in athletic performance; and selective androgen receptor modulators, which are known as "SARMs." The substances can carry health risks and are prohibited in sports under the World Anti-Doping Code. Anabolic steroids are also illegal to use without a prescription under U.S. law. Peptide hormones and SARMs are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use and should not be purchased in dietary supplements, according to the U.S. Anti-Doping agency. Researchers with the nonprofit are urging lawmakers to investigate loopholes that allow sites selling the substances to operate online. □



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Ringo Starr on 'Rewind Forward,' writing country music, the AI-assisted final Beatles track and more

By **MARIA SHERMAN**
AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — There are rock stars, and then there is Ringo Starr — drummer for the Beatles, award-winning soloist, photographer, narrator, actor, activist. To call him prolific would almost shortchange his accomplishments. But it also feels right. "Rewind Forward," out October 13, is his fourth extended play release in three years.

"I've loved EPs since they first came out in the '60s," he says of the format. "And then I heard the kids are making EPs and thought, 'That's good!'"

The title is a classic "Ringoism," as John Lennon used to refer to his malapropisms, an unusual phrase ripped from the same mind that came up with "A Hard Day's Night" and "Tomorrow Never Knows."

Assigning profundity to it came later. "I think it means that, you know, you're sitting still for a while. You rewind and you find out 'I was a much better person then,' or 'this was working for me better then,' he says. You don't have to ever live in the past, but just check it occasionally."

"Of course, I'm making all this up," he jokes.



Ringo Starr poses for a portrait, Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2023, at the Sunset Marquis Hotel in West Hollywood, Calif., to promote his EP "Rewind Forward," out October 13.

Starr got a little help from his friends on the four track EP, a collection of life-affirming songs co-penned by Starr's engineer frequent co-writer Bruce Sugar, Steve Lukather of the All Starr Band, Toto's Joe Williams, Benmont Tench and Mike Campbell of Tom Petty's Heartbreakers, and many more.

"Feeling the Sunlight" was written by Beatle Paul McCartney, who Starr says he "FaceTimes twice a month" and hangs out with when-

ever he is in London, or McCartney is in LA.

"When he sent the track, he'd actually done the drums, so we had to take them off," he says, laughing. If there is a thematic throughline to "Rewind Forward," or any of Starr's solo work, it's a kind of unrelenting optimism that even in the most troubling circumstances, peace and love will see you through.

It's that spirit that has kept him moving forward. He's

currently embarked on a fall tour, which began September 17th in Ontario, California, and ends next month in Thackerville, Oklahoma. It's a feat for a veteran performer when so many bands are embarking on farewell tours.

"A lot of people have said 'That's the last gig!' And I say it after every tour and our children and my wife are fed up with me. 'Oh, you said that last time,'" he jokes. And yet, he contin-

ues to hit the road because he simply loves it: "I get everything I need."

More short collections are on the horizon, too. ("Right now, I'm EP crazy," he says.) The next one is founded in country music. While attending a poetry reading by Olivia Harrison, late Beatle George Harrison's widow, Starr ran into "T-Bone" Burnett. They decided to work together. Starr thought he'd get a pop number, but Burnett instead sent him a country song. "He actually opened the door," he says. "So, I thought, 'Why don't we do that, too? A country one.'" Recently, Starr collaborated with McCartney on Dolly Parton's cover of the Beatles' "Let It Be." ("It's good to be a part of it," he says, adding that it required no convincing. "I'm easy.") In June, news broke that a final Beatles recording would soon become available, created using artificial intelligence technology to extricate John Lennon's voice from a piano demo the same method used to separate the Beatles' voices from background sounds during the making of director Peter Jackson's 2021 documentary series, "The Beatles: Get Back." □

Associated Press

Al Di Meola suffers a heart attack on stage in Romania but is now in a stable condition



U.S. guitarist Al Di Meola raises his hand at the Arenele Romane concert venue during his performance in Bucharest, Romania, Wednesday evening, Sept. 27, 2023.

Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — The award-winning U.S. guitarist Al Di Meola suffered a heart attack during a performance in Romania's capital but is currently in a stable condition and receiving treatment, a hospital spokesperson said on Thursday.

Di Meola, 69, began playing a concert at a venue in Bucharest at 9 p.m. on Wednesday night.

Dragos Cristescu, a photographer who attended the concert, told The Associated Press that he saw Di Meola clasp his chest dur-

ing the performance and that the guitarist struggled to walk off stage. The other two members of Di Meola's trio continued to play for several minutes until they announced the show would be cut short.

In a statement, the Bagdasar-Arseni emergency hospital said Di Meola was admitted to a cardiology ward where he is being treated for a segment elevation myocardial infarction, or STEMI.

According to the health care website Cleveland Clinic, a STEMI mainly af-

fects the heart's lower chambers and "tend(s) to be more severe and dangerous compared to other types of heart attack."

Di Meola's decades-long career has earned him widespread critical acclaim and awards including a Grammy. One of Di Meola's most popular tracks is "Mediterranean Sundance," which was part of his 1977 album "Elegant Gypsy."

According to his official website, he has sold more than 6 million records worldwide. □

Versatile forwards including Stewart, Wilson in WNBA playoffs reflect growth of women's game

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The WNBA game has changed and its evolution can be seen in the WNBA semifinals. From Lisa Leslie and Tina Thompson to Lauren Jackson, Candace Parker and Elena Delle Donne, there have always been one or two post players with the ability to step out and shoot the 3 or be a playmaker away from the basket. They changed the way the game has been played over the 27-year history of the league.

Today, WNBA rosters list those coveted forwards with the versatile skillsets.

The top six finishers in the MVP race were forwards and the top three vote getters Breanna Stewart, A'ja Wilson and Alyssa Thomas as well as fifth place finisher Satou Sabally have led their teams to the semifinals that continue Friday night. "You saw it on the men's side. You go back to Tina Thompson and Lauren Jackson. Breanna Stewart fits in that slot where it's just big and highly skilled,"



Connecticut Sun guard Tiffany Hayes (15) and forward Olivia Nelson-Ododa (10) guard New York Liberty forward Breanna Stewart, center, during the second half of Game 2 of a WNBA basketball playoffs semifinal Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023, in New York.

Aces coach Becky Hammon said. "A'ja is big, athletic and highly skilled. Her efficiency has been off the charts. It's crazy how efficient she's been. I think the league as a whole kind of took a step forward with spacing, scoring."

It's more common now to see forwards bringing the

ball up the court and shoot 3s to go along with their rebounding and scoring.

Wilson has expanded her game since she entered the league in 2018. She was always able to attack the basket on drives and finish on the break, running the floor well. Now she's extended her shooting

range. In her first four years she took just two 3-point attempts. She's taken 112 combined over the past two seasons and made 40. "The game grows every single year, so my influence is I've had to stay ahead of the game at all aspects of my game," said the 6-foot-4 Wilson.

Associated Press

"I've got to be prepared for pretty much anything because I'm going to see a lot of different things." The 6-4 Stewart, who was honored as the league's MVP on Tuesday after being named the AP Player of the Year, credits her dad for getting her started at an early age to be more than just a post player. "He made sure I wasn't just a back to the basket player or a run to the block player because of my height," Stewart said. "My height didn't define what position I played, but only made it so I could play more. ... The ability to do multiple things. "When you have multiple tools in your tool box it's harder to defend."

Stewart also is a strong playmaker, bringing the ball up the floor at times to help alleviate pressure defense that teams have thrown at New York. Her 6-6 Liberty teammate Jonquel Jones is another versatile post giving New York two threats, who can play inside or out. The Liberty forward isn't the only facilitator from the position. □

Cabrera's 511th home run lifts Tigers over Royals 8-0 in completion of suspended game

By DAVE HOGG
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Miguel Cabrera hit his 511th home run and scored twice, and the Detroit Tigers beat the Kansas City Royals 8-0 Thursday in the completion of a suspended game.

Cabrera, who is retiring after the season, tied Mel Ott for 25th on the career home run list. The 40-year-old has 373 homers for Detroit, tying Norm Cash for second behind Al Kaline's 399. Play was suspended because of rain after four innings and an 80-minute wait on Wednesday night.

Miguel Díaz (1-0) pitched two innings for the win. Kansas City was held to four hits for the 25th time this season.

Detroit has pitched 14 shutouts. At 54-104, the Royals have their most losses since 2018.

Cabrera homered leading off the second against

Jonathan Bowlan (0-1), a 26-year-old right-hander who allowed one run and three hits over two innings in his major league debut.

"I was a lot more comfort-



Detroit Tigers' Miguel Cabrera hits a fly ball for an out against the Kansas City Royals during the sixth inning of a baseball game Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023, in Detroit.

Associated Press

able out there than I expected it felt like home," Bowlan said. "I was just zoned in and pitching like I have all my life."

Cabrera's homer, his fourth this season, would have hit the out-of-town scoreboard before this season's renovations lowered the fence in right-centerfield.

"It's meaningful, because he wants to win games," Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said. "Is it his last homer? I don't know, but that was vintage Miggy. That's how he hits."

Cabrera singled in the fourth for his 3,170th hit, took second on Andy Ibañez's double, and scored on pinch-hitter Tyler Nevin's three-run homer.

Detroit added two runs in

the fifth on Cabrera's bases-loaded walk and Ibañez's RBI forceout.

Jake Rogers hit a two-run homer in the eighth off Jackson Kowar.

Parker Meadows made a leaping catch at the center-field wall for the final out, denying Nelson Velazquez.

Detroit right-hander Sawyer Gipson-Long (1-0, 2.40) was to start the scheduled game against left-hander Cole Ragans (7-4, 3.11).

MOTHER NATURE

Most of the completion was played in light showers, but rain grew heavier during the fourth inning. Crew chief Marvin Hudson called for the tarp after a lengthy attempt to get the field playable to start the fifth. □

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As the debate over the value of running backs rages, the Steelers provide an interesting case study

By **WILL GRAVES**
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The differences between Najee Harris and Jaylen Warren are stark.

Height. Weight. Draft profile. College pedigree. Temperament. Approach to their job.

It's a dichotomy the Steelers believe they can exploit in hopes of getting the best out of both. It's also a compelling case study in the ongoing debate on the value of running backs, a debate with no right answer and maybe no wrong one either.

The 6-foot-1, 232-pound Harris is a 2021 first-round pick who starred at Alabama and arrived in Pittsburgh expecting to be the "bell cow" for years to come, a euphemism coach Mike Tomlin has used on more than one occasion.

The 25-year-old has the prototypical size and approach of a franchise back, eager to stiff-arm a defender to the ground when he can, more eager and perhaps more suited to run through opponents than run by them.

Warren is five inches shorter and 17 pounds lighter. His college journey began at Snow College in central Utah before stops at Utah State and Oklahoma State. He arrived at Saint Vincent College for training camp in the summer of 2022 as an undrafted rookie free agent well aware he didn't fit the profile no matter how quickly he seemed to burst through a hole or have his legs churn through the arms of would-be tacklers. He was always too something. Too short. Too small.



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Kenny Pickett, right, hands off to running back Najee Harris (22) during the first half of an NFL football game against the Las Vegas Raiders Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023, in Las Vegas.

Too unknown. And, it turns out, too relentless to turn away.

Warren made the team as Harris' backup in 2022 thanks in large part to the way he fearlessly throws his body in front of oncoming pass rushers, a skillset he showcased last Sunday against the Raiders when he took on Las Vegas star defensive end Maxx Crosby all 6-5 and 255 pounds of him in the first quarter to buy quarterback Kenny Pickett enough time to hit Calvin Austin for a 72-yard touchdown.

"Crosby came looping. I couldn't just let him go past," Warren said. "I feel like with the bigger guys, you've got to hit them harder than the people that's not that size because you are going to get run over if you don't."

It was the kind of play a guy who knows he can never

give a coaching staff a reason to say "no" needs to make. It's also the kind of play the inner masochist in Warren enjoys.

"They say there's going to be something you hate about your job, I don't see that as that," Warren said. "I actually like blitz pickup. I just like the physicality of it." While everyone from Tomlin to offensive coordinator Matt Canada emphasizes that Harris is "our guy" as Canada put it Thursday, reality offers a slightly different view.

Heading into Sunday's visit to Houston (1-2), their playing time and production have been nearly equal. Harris has 38 touches for 141 yards while playing 53% of the snaps. Warren has 29 touches for 156 yards while playing 43% of the snaps. Then there's the money. Harris counts \$3.5 million against the salary cap. War-

ren just \$874,000, though his take-home pay will take a bit of a hit if he can't get the \$48,000 fine he earned for a helmet-to-helmet hit against Cleveland on Sept. 18 overturned on appeal, an amount that's the rough equivalent of two game checks (after taxes). "Playing for the love of the game the next two weeks," Warren said with a laugh. Why not? It's what got him here. It's also why he'll begrudgingly pay the fine if it comes to that and why he shrugged when asked if he plans to do anything differently in the future.

"I'll play the same way," Warren said. "I wouldn't have made the team if I didn't play the way I play do. Damned if I do. Damned if I don't." There is no rivalry here. Not yet anyway. The Steelers made an intentional decision to take a little bit off

Harris' plate after he had an NFL-high 381 touches as a rookie. That number dropped to 313 last season and is on pace to dip a little further in 2023, though it is still really early and Harris' limited touches through three weeks are as much a byproduct of the offense's inability to sustain drives as anything else.

"I think we want to be balanced to a point, but obviously Najee's our guy and he's going to have the workload and majority of carries in a lot of instances," Canada said. "But we think Jaylen is a great talent, does a lot of things and when he spells Najee, good things happen too." The Steelers had five scoring drives against the Raiders. On four of them, Harris and Warren had at least one carry each.

"As long as we're trending upwards, that's all that matters," Harris said. "The run game is starting to help open up a lot of stuff, play-action started to help to create those big plays. We're getting there." Focus on "we."

While Harris wasn't shy during the offseason about urging the NFL to find a way to pay running backs what they believe they're worth, it hasn't affected his relationship with Warren, who at the moment is providing a similar service for a fraction of the price.

"We are constantly helping each other out, letting each other know what's going on throughout the game," Warren said. "Just kind of picking each other's brain. Competition is what pushes us to be better. But we're going to be there for each other." □