



Today is going to be a good day!



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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

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12-1 / 4-6 / 9-10

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U.S. appeals court refuses to vacate Biden approval of Alaska's Willow oil project

By **BECKY BOHRER**

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) —

A federal appeals court panel on Friday refused to vacate the approval of the massive Willow oil project on Alaska's petroleum-rich North Slope though it found flaws in how the approval was reached.

The decision from a panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals comes in a long-running dispute over the project, most recently greenlit in March 2023 by then-President Joe Biden's administration and under development in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska by ConocoPhillips Alaska.

The court's majority opinion found what it called a procedural error but not a serious or substantive one by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management as part of the analysis in approving Willow. The court sent the matter back to the agency for additional work.

The majority determined that vacating the project's approval would be unwarranted and its consequences severe, though Judge Gabriel P. Sanchez



Demonstrators protest against the Biden administration's approval of the Willow oil-drilling project before a scheduled speech by Biden at the Department of the Interior in Washington, Tuesday, March 21, 2023.

Associated Press

dissented on that point.

A prior version of the project approved late in President Donald Trump's first term was overturned in 2021, leading to the environmental review process completed under Biden that drew the latest legal challenges from environmentalists and a grassroots

Iñupiat group.

Alaska's Republican governor and its congressional delegation and state Legislature have backed Willow. The project also has broad support among Alaska Native leaders on the North Slope and groups with ties to the region who see Willow as economically vital

for their communities.

But critics cast the project as being at odds with Biden's pledges to combat climate change and raised concerns that it would drive further industrialization in the region.

Trump expressed support for additional drilling in the reserve as part of a broad-

er, Alaska-specific executive order he signed upon his return to office aimed at boosting oil and gas drilling, mining and logging in the state.

During the cold-weather seasons, ConocoPhillips Alaska has worked to build infrastructure such as new gravel roads, bridges and pipelines at the project site, and it has laid out a timeline for producing first oil in 2029. In a statement Friday, the company said it welcomed the ruling and looked forward to "continuing the responsible development of Willow."

J. Elizabeth Peace, a spokesperson with the U.S. Department of the Interior, said the agency doesn't comment on litigation. The Bureau of Land Management falls under Interior.

The appeals panel ruling comes more than a year after it heard arguments in the case. Environmental groups and the grassroots Sovereign Iñupiat for a Living Arctic had appealed a lower-court ruling that upheld Willow's approval. Attorneys representing the groups on Friday were evaluating next steps. □

U.S. helps Israel shoot down barrage of Iranian missiles

By **TARA COPP and**

LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

American air defense systems and Navy assets in the Middle East helped Israel shoot down incoming ballistic missiles Friday that Tehran launched in

response to Israeli strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities and top military leaders, a U.S. official said.

The U.S. has both ground-based Patriot missile defense systems and Terminal High Altitude Air Defense systems in the region capable of intercepting ballistic

missiles, which Iran fired in multiple barrages in retaliation for Israel's initial attack. Naval assets also were involved in assisting Israel as Iran fired missiles at Tel Aviv, another official said. It was not immediately clear if ships fired interceptors or if their advanced missile tracking systems helped Israel identify incoming targets.

The United States also is shifting military resources, including ships, in the Middle East in response to the strikes.

The Navy has directed the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, which is capable of defending against ballistic missiles, to begin sailing from the western Mediterranean Sea toward the eastern Mediterranean and has directed a second

destroyer to begin moving forward so it can be available if requested by the White House, U.S. officials said.

American fighter jets also are patrolling the sky in the Middle East to protect personnel and installations, and air bases in the region are taking additional security precautions, the officials said. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide details not yet made public or to discuss ongoing operations.

President Donald Trump met with his National Security Council principals Friday to discuss options.

The forces in the region have been taking precautionary measures for days, including having military dependents voluntarily depart regional bases, in

anticipation of the strikes and to protect personnel in case of a large-scale response from Tehran.

Typically around 30,000 troops are based in the Middle East, and about 40,000 troops are in the region now, according to a U.S. official. That number surged as high as 43,000 last October amid the ongoing tensions between Israel and Iran as well as continuous attacks on commercial and military ships in the Red Sea by the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen.

The Navy has additional assets that it could surge to the Middle East if needed, particularly its aircraft carriers and the warships that sail with them. The USS Carl Vinson is in the Arabian Sea the only aircraft carrier in the region. □



The future USS Thomas Hudner, a U.S. Navy destroyer named after Korean War veteran Thomas Hudner, during christening ceremony at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, April 1, 2017.

Associated Press

Judge blocks Trump's election executive order, siding with Democrats who called it overreach

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A federal judge on Friday blocked President Donald Trump's attempt to overhaul elections in the U.S., siding with a group of Democratic state attorneys general who challenged the effort as unconstitutional.

The Republican president's March 25 executive order sought to compel officials to require documentary proof of citizenship for everyone registering to vote for federal elections, accept only mailed ballots received by Election Day and condition federal election grant funding on states adhering to the new ballot deadline.

The attorneys general had argued the directive "usurps the States' constitutional power and seeks to amend election law by fiat." The White House had defended the order as "standing up for free, fair and honest elections" and called proof of citizenship a "commonsense" requirement.

Judge Denise J. Casper of the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts said in Friday's order that the states had a likelihood of success as to their legal challenges. "The Constitution does not grant the President any specific powers over elec-



President Donald Trump walks across the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, March 25, 2018.

Associated Press

tions," Casper wrote. Casper also noted that, when it comes to citizenship, "there is no dispute (nor could there be) that U.S. citizenship is required to vote in federal elections and the federal voter registration forms require attestation of citizenship."

Casper also cited arguments made by the states that the requirements would "burden the States with significant efforts and substantial costs" to update procedures.

Messages seeking a re-

sponse from the White House and the Department of Justice were not immediately returned. The attorneys general for California and New York praised the ruling in statements to The Associated Press, calling Trump's order unconstitutional.

"Free and fair elections are the foundation of this nation, and no president has the power to steal that right from the American people," New York Attorney General Letitia James said. The ruling is the second

legal setback for Trump's election order. A federal judge in Washington, D.C., previously blocked parts of the directive, including the proof-of-citizenship requirement for the federal voter registration form.

The order is the culmination of Trump's longstanding complaints about elections. After his first win in 2016, Trump falsely claimed his popular vote total would have been much higher if not for "millions of people who voted illegally." Since 2020, Trump has made false

claims of widespread voter fraud and manipulation of voting machines to explain his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

He has said his executive order secures elections against illegal voting by noncitizens, though multiple studies and investigations in the states have shown that it's rare and typically a mistake. Casting a ballot as a noncitizen is already against the law and can result in fines and deportation if convicted.

Also blocked in Friday's ruling was part of the order that sought to require states to exclude any mail-in or absentee ballots received after Election Day. Currently, 18 states and Puerto Rico accept mailed ballots received after Election Day as long they are postmarked on or before that date, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Oregon and Washington, which conduct their elections almost entirely by mail, filed a separate lawsuit over the ballot deadline, saying the executive order could disenfranchise voters in their states. When the lawsuit was filed, Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs noted that more than 300,000 ballots in the state arrived after Election Day in 2024. □

At least 5 dead and 2 missing in San Antonio after heavy rains flood parts of Texas

By LEKAN OYEKANMI and JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Heavy rains in San Antonio rapidly flooded roads,



Multiple damaged cars are seen in flood waters Thursday, June 12, 2025, after heavy rains overnight in San Antonio.

Associated Press

swept away submerged cars and sent some people scrambling up trees to escape fast-rising waters Thursday while firefighters made dozens of rescues across the nation's seventh-largest city. At least five people died and two were still missing, authorities said. The deaths all occurred in the northeast part of the city, where authorities found over a dozen vehicles in the water. More than a dozen smashed and overturned vehicles littered a creek after being tossed and

carried by floodwaters. Some of the people rescued in that area said they were swept off an interstate access road by "sudden fast rising water," San Antonio Fire Department spokesperson Joe Arrington said in an email. He said floodwaters swept vehicles into a creek and carried them downstream. Crews brought in search dogs Thursday afternoon to help find missing people, Arrington said. By afternoon, crews could be seen pulling heavily damaged vehicles out of

the creek. Calls for water rescues began before sunrise, officials said. Two women and two men were found dead, according to police Chief William McManus, who did not have their ages. The fire department made 70 water rescues, officials said. Fire officials said that while most of the rescue calls consisted of crews helping drivers from vehicles that were stalled in high water, several "harrowing" calls involved their crews entering swift-moving water to rescue someone. □

The longest-serving legislative leader in U.S. history will be sentenced on corruption charges

By JOHN O'CONNOR

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — Michael Madigan's stunning political collapse is expected to culminate Friday when the longest-serving legislative leader in U.S. history is sentenced on federal bribery, conspiracy and wire fraud convictions tied to a scheme to push legislation in exchange for jobs and contracts for his associates.

The former Illinois House speaker was convicted in February on 10 of 23 counts in a remarkable corruption trial that lasted four months. The case churned through 60 witnesses and mountains of documents, photographs and taped conversations.

Madigan will appear in U.S. District Court Friday in Chicago, where Judge John Robert Blakey will determine his sentence.

Federal prosecutors are seeking a 12 1/2-year prison term. Madigan's attorneys are seeking probation, contending the government's sentence would "condemn an 83-year-old man to die behind bars for



Former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan arrives at federal court where he is on trial for charges in a multimillion-dollar racketeering and bribery scheme, Oct. 21, 2024, in Chicago.

Associated Press

crimes that enriched him not one penny."

During a legislative career that spanned a half-century, Madigan served nearly four decades as speaker, the longest on record for a U.S. legislator. Combined with more than 20 years as chairperson of the Illinois Democratic Party, he set much of the state's political

agenda while handpicking candidates for political office. More often than not, he also controlled political mapmaking, drawing lines to favor his party.

Meanwhile, prosecutors said, the Chicago Democrat built a private legal career that allowed him to amass a net worth of \$40 million.

Madigan was convicted on 10 counts of bribery, conspiracy, wire fraud and other charges for ensuring approval of legislation favorable to utility giant ComEd in exchange for kickbacks and jobs and contracts for loyalists, including a Chicago alderman seeking a paid job on a state board after retiring from govern-

ment.

The jury deadlocked on six counts, including an overarching racketeering conspiracy charge, and acquitted him on seven others.

"Madigan's criminal activity spanned nearly a decade and was particularly egregious because it involved efforts to enrich himself both by maintaining his political power by securing do-nothing jobs for his political allies and by attempting to line his own pockets with legal business," prosecutors wrote in a court filing. "In so doing, Madigan served his own personal interests and not the interests of Illinoisans."

Defense lawyers called the government's recommended sentence "draconian" and, given Madigan's age, a life sentence. They asked Blakey to consider the totality of Madigan's life and work and the need to care for his wife in requesting a sentence of five years' probation, with one year of home confinement, a requirement to perform community service and a "reasonable fine." □

New Hampshire jury acquits consultant behind AI robocalls mimicking Biden on all charges

By HOLLY RAMER

Associated Press

A political consultant who sent artificial intelligence-generated robocalls mimicking former President Joe Biden to New Hampshire Democrats last year was acquitted Friday of voter suppression and impersonating a candidate.

Steven Kramer, 56, of New Orleans, admitted orchestrating a message sent to thousands of voters two days before the state's Jan. 23, 2024, presidential primary. Recipients heard an AI-generated voice similar to the Democratic president's that used his catchphrase "What a bunch of malarkey" and, as prosecutors alleged, suggested that voting in the primary would preclude voters from cast-

ing ballots in November.

"It's important that you save your vote for the November election," voters were told.

"Your votes make a difference in November, not this Tuesday."

Kramer, who would have faced decades in prison if convicted, testified that he wanted to send a wake-up call about the potential dangers of AI when he paid a New Orleans ma-

gician \$150 to create the recording. He was getting frequent calls from people using AI in campaigns, and, worried about the lack of regulations, made it his New Year's resolution to take action.

"This is going to be my one good deed this year," he recalled while testifying in Belknap County Superior Court.

Prosecutors argued the calls amounted to an attack on the integrity of the primary, while Kramer's defense tried to direct outrage at the Democratic National Committee instead.

At Biden's request, the DNC dislodged New Hampshire from its traditional early spot in the 2024 nominating calendar, but later dropped its threat not to seat the

state's national convention delegates. Biden did not put his name on the ballot or campaign there, but won as a write-in.

Kramer, who owns a firm specializing in get-out-the-vote projects, argued that the primary was a meaningless straw poll unsanctioned by the DNC, and therefore the state's voter suppression law didn't apply.

The defense also said he didn't impersonate a candidate because the message didn't include Biden's name, and Biden wasn't a declared candidate in the primary.

Jurors apparently agreed, acquitting him of 11 felony voter suppression charges, each punishable by up to seven years in prison. □



Steven Kramer is seated June 5, 2024, at Superior Court, in Laconia, N.H., during his arraignment in connection with charges of voter suppression and impersonating a candidate.

Associated Press

U.N. votes overwhelmingly to demand Gaza ceasefire, hostage release and aid access

By **EDITH M. LEDERER**
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. member nations voted overwhelmingly Thursday to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages held by Hamas, and unrestricted access for the delivery of desperately needed food to 2 million Palestinians. The vote in the 193-member General Assembly was 149-12 with 19 abstentions. It was adopted with a burst of applause. The United States and close ally Israel opposed the resolution, along with Argentina, Hungary, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea and six Pacific island nations.

The resolution, drafted by Spain, "strongly condemns any use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare."

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon spoke vehemently against the resolution, especially for failing to condemn Hamas for its attack in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, which triggered the war in Gaza. He denied that Israel was using starvation as a weapon of



Relatives mourn over the body of Palestinian teenager Ghazal Eyad, 16, who was killed while heading to an aid distribution hub, during her funeral in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Wednesday, June 11, 2025.

war, calling the accusation a "blood libel," and insisted that aid is being delivered. Experts and human rights workers say hunger is widespread in Gaza and some 2 million Palestinians are at risk of famine if Israel does not fully lift its blockade and halt its military campaign, which it renewed in March after ending a ceasefire

with Hamas. The Palestinian U.N. ambassador, Riyad Mansour, pleaded with U.N. members to approve the resolution.

"The actions you take today to stop the killing, displacement and the famine will determine how many more Palestinian children die a horrible death," he said.

The Palestinians and their supporters went to the General Assembly after the U.N. Security Council failed to pass a resolution last week demanding a ceasefire in Gaza and calling on Israel to lift all restrictions on the delivery of aid. The United States scuttled the resolution with its veto because it was not linked to

the release of the hostages, while all 14 other members of the council voted in favor. It was the fifth time the U.S. had vetoed a resolution calling for a halt to the fighting.

General Assembly President Philemon Yang said in opening Thursday's meeting that the world body once again was being called on to address "the unacceptable and catastrophic situation in Gaza" because the Security Council is paralyzed and unable to fulfil its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

There are no vetoes in the assembly. But unlike in the Security Council, its resolutions are not legally binding, though they are seen as a barometer of world opinion.

After a 10-week blockade that barred all aid to Gaza, Israel is allowing the United Nations to deliver a trickle of food assistance and is backing a newly created U.S. aid group, which has opened several sites in the center and south of the territory to deliver food parcels. □

American man detained in Greece over suspected double killing of infant and woman in Rome

By **COLLEEN BARRY and COSTAS KANTOURIS**
Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Greek au-

thorities detained an American man on Friday on the Greek island of Skiathos suspected of kill-

ing an infant found over the weekend in a Rome park and of having a role in the death of a woman believed to be the infant's mother, whose body was found nearby.

The American, who wasn't identified, was detained on a European arrest warrant issued in Italy, citing "strong evidence" of his suspected involvement in the death of the baby girl, chief Rome prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi told a news conference in Rome. Italian investigators said that the cause of the woman's death wasn't known, "but there is a reasonable suspicion that it is a double murder," deputy prosecutor Giuseppe Cascini said. The bodies of the baby girl

and mother, also believed to be American, were found in Rome's Villa Pamphili park on Saturday. The mother's body was under a black bag, having been killed several days before the infant, who was found several hundred meters away in undergrowth.

Both were naked, and without any identification, Lo Voi said. The suspect, who witnesses had seen in the presence of a woman and infant, fled Italy for Skiathos on Wednesday, Lo Voi said. He will be formally arrested when the warrant is forwarded to Greek officials, and will appear for an extradition hearing next week, Greek police told The Associated Press.

"It is not exactly understandable that someone who was with a woman and a baby girl, once the woman and the girl died, whom he carried in his arms, would then leave the country without calling for help, without seeking assistance," Lo Voi said. "In itself, that doesn't look good." The victims' relationship with the suspect wasn't immediately clear but video surveillance and witness reports put them together on several occasions; witnesses heard them speaking in English. They had been traced to a shelter for the needy near the Vatican, where they appeared to be a nuclear family, Corriere della Sera reported. □



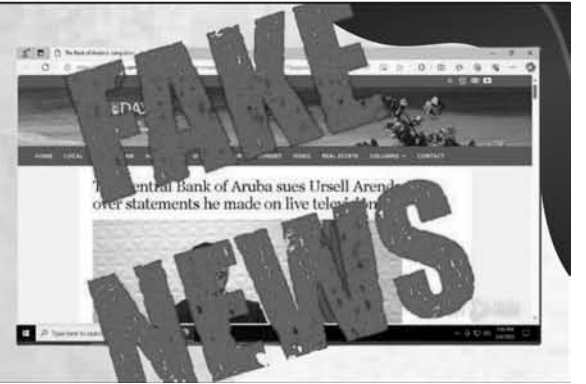
A woman films as a passerby stops by forensic police working at the site of the discovery of the body of an infant and the infant's mother, in Rome's Villa Pamphili park, Saturday, June 7, 2025.

Associated Press

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A letter demanding data on Cuban medical missions roils the Caribbean and the Americas

By **DÁNICA COTO**
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— An unusual request from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights about Cuban medical brigades that operate worldwide and provide much needed help has roiled countries in the Caribbean and the Americas.

In a letter obtained by The Associated Press, the commission asks members of the Organization of American States, OAS, for details including whether they have an agreement with Cuba for medical missions, whether those workers have labor and union rights and information about any labor complaints.

"This was an unprecedented move," said Francesca Emanuele, senior international policy associate at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington. "It's deeply troubling."

Cuba has more than 22,000 doctors working in more than 50 countries, including in the Caribbean and the Americas, according to its government.

A breakdown for the region was not available, but many impoverished nations in the Caribbean rely heavily on those medical professionals.

The commission, an independent body of the OAS, which is heavily funded by the U.S., said it plans to analyze the data collected as well as offer recommendations "given the persistence of reports of rights violations."

A spokesperson for the commission declined comment, saying the letter is private.

The letter was sent after U.S. Secretary of State Marco



Cuban doctors arrive at the Jose Marti International Airport in Havana, Cuba, June 8, 2020, after traveling to Italy to help with the COVID-19 emergency response.

Associated Press

Rubio announced visa restrictions in late February for Cuban or foreign government officials accused of involvement in Cuba's medical missions, which he called "forced labor."

"The timing is really suspicious," Emanuele said, noting that the information requested "falls squarely" within the member states' sovereign decision-making. "The role of this organization should not be distorted."

In June, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump slapped several unidentified officials from Central America with visa restrictions.

A deadline looms Silence has prevailed since the human rights commission issued its May 24 letter giving OAS member states 30 days to respond.

"I'm awaiting a regional approach," said Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of St. Vincent and the

Grenadines.

He said in a phone interview that he would raise the issue next week during a meeting of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States as chairman.

"There are no human rights issues involved here," he said, noting that St. Vincent is party to several international and labor conventions. "They have not been breached and will not be breached."

Gonsalves said Cuban doctors run the sole hemodialysis center in St. Vincent that provides free care to 64 patients at a rate of \$5 million a year.

"Without the Cubans, that dialysis center will close," he said.

When asked if he worried about potential visa restrictions, Gonsalves said he met earlier this year with Rubio and provided a lengthy letter that he declined to share detailing the work of Cuban medical profession-

als in St. Vincent.

"We didn't scrimp on any of the details," he said. "I didn't walk away from that meeting thinking that there was any possibility or threat of sanctions."

A divided region

Guyana's foreign minister, Hugh Todd, told The Associated Press on Friday that the government plans to amend its payment and recruitment system involving Cuban medical professionals.

He said their main concern "is to make sure we are compliant with international labor laws." Todd did not say whether the planned amendments are related to concerns over U.S. visa restrictions.

Late Thursday, Guyanese Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo said the government wants to ensure that "the conditions of work here don't run afoul of the requirements set by the United States of America."

Guyana depends heavily on the U.S. for support, especially given an ongoing and bitter border dispute with neighboring Venezuela.

Some Caribbean leaders have said they would risk losing a U.S. visa, noting that Cuban medical professionals provide much needed help in the region.

"If we cannot reach a sensible agreement on this matter...if the cost of it is the loss of my visa to the U.S., then so be it," Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley told Parliament in March as legislators pounded a table in support.

No Cuban medical workers are currently in Barbados.

Echoing Mottley's sentiment was Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Keith Rowley.

"I just came back from California, and if I never go back there again in my life, I will ensure that the sovereignty of Trinidad and Tobago is known to its people and respected by all," he said in March.

In April, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel criticized what he described as a campaign against the Caribbean country.

"There is no doubt that that desperate campaign to block Cuban cooperation has two clear objectives: to close off any avenue of income for the country, even in an activity as noble and necessary to other nations as healthcare services," he said.

"The other reason is political and ideological: they want to sweep Cuba away as an example. And they resort to methods as immoral as threatening any foreign official involved in that activity," he added. □

Aruba is once again entering hurricane season

Awareness and preparation are key for hurricane season

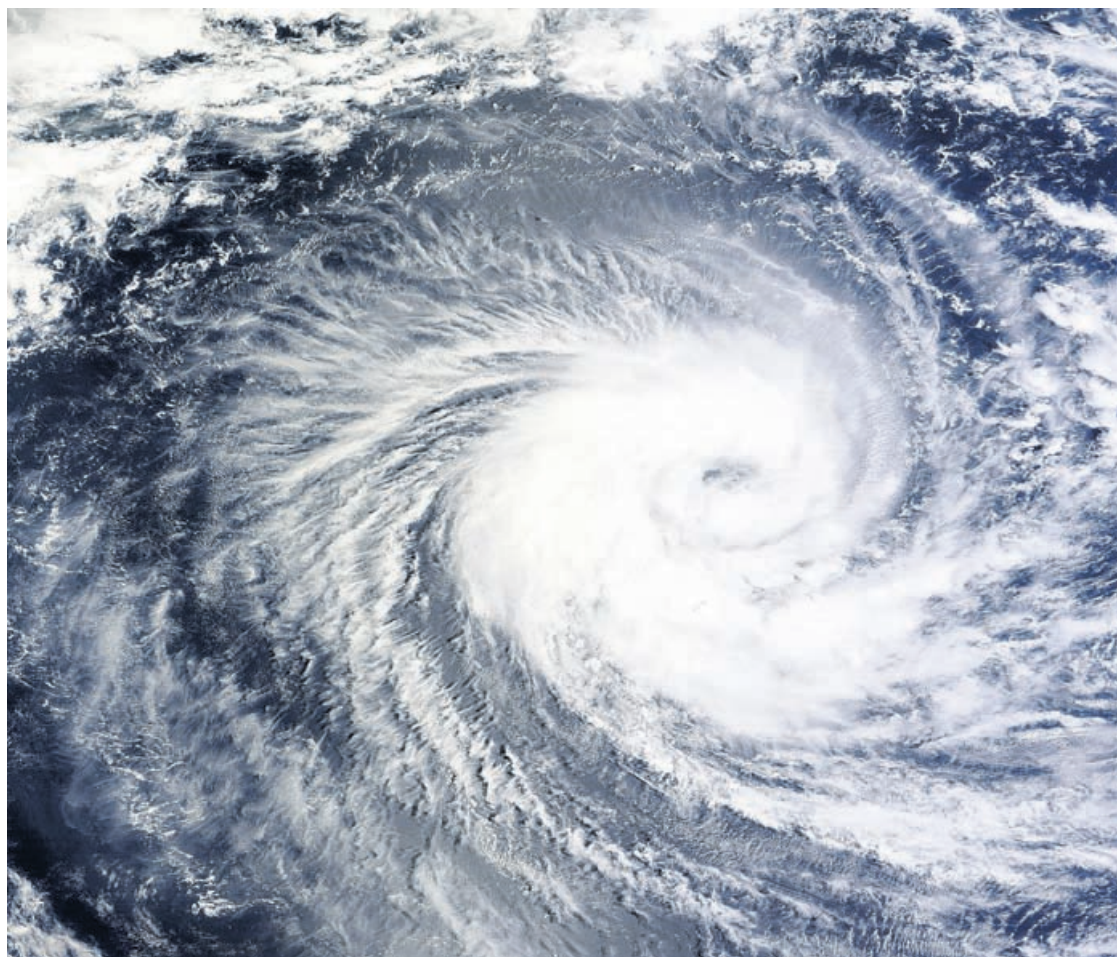
Hurricane season is the time of year—usually from June 1 to November 30—when tropical or subtropical cyclones are more likely to form.

These dates mark the period in which most tropical activity occurs in what's called the "basin." However, it's important to understand that storms can still form at any time of the year; the difference is simply that the likelihood is much higher during this official season.

Globally, this season's climate activity usually peaks toward the end of summer, when the difference between air temperature and ocean surface temperature is greatest. In terms of months, this tends to be from late August through September, with peak activity around September 10. Still, since this involves nature, nothing is guaranteed—it's all based on calculations and predictions. Sudden changes are always possible.

These tropical or subtropical cyclones that reach tropical storm intensity often receive a name from a predetermined list. On average, 14 named storms occur each season, with an average of 7 becoming hurricanes and 3 reaching major hurricane status—Category 3 or higher on the Saffir-Simpson scale. The most active season on record was in 2020, with 30 named tropical cyclones. However, the 2005 season had the most hurricanes, with a record 15 forming.

According to news outlet NPR and meteorological experts on our neighboring island Curaçao, with whom Aruba collaborates on various meteorology matters, the need for proper preparation is absolutely critical. With just one storm, a season can be not only active but also potentially devastating for your country or even just your neighborhood.



A common misconception is that a hurricane must come close to cause damage. However, hurricanes have a wide range of effects.

Even storms that don't become hurricanes can cause deadly flooding, and experts say water-related dangers account for the highest number of hurricane-related fatalities. The impacts of flooding and wind can be felt both near and far from the coast, and such impacts can be very serious, whether caused by a hurricane or tropical storm. In addition, scientists note that climate change means storms are bringing more rain, flooding, and damage faster to coastal areas. The director of NOAA's National Hurricane Center said in a press conference last week that especially in flood-prone areas, it is crucial to understand that freshwater flooding is a significant source of recent losses.

Emergency preparedness

According to experts, having an evacuation plan is important. Whether or not you believe an evacuation

is likely, preparation is key for any unexpected scenario. If you do find yourself needing to evacuate, having a planned route ahead of time can be crucial to reaching safety. And of course, we should always include our pets in our preparation plans.

Other important forms of preparation include strengthening and cleaning around your home. Trim trees near your home to prevent broken branches or flying debris in strong winds. Make sure you have the necessary materials on hand in case you need to suddenly secure windows and protect them from flying objects. At similar wind speeds, it's also important to bring indoors or secure anything loose in your yard. These objects can become hazards not only to your house but also to nearby homes.

Aruba Today had the opportunity to speak with Aruba's meteorologist, Mr. Rodney Tromp. He shared that a hurricane doesn't need to hit directly to cause damage. We already know that heavy rainfall can cause damage, es-

pecially when combined with lightning and thunder, and the extent of damage depends on its intensity. It's important to be aware of this and prepare accordingly. DOW is doing its part to prepare, as are the CMO, Disaster Response Bureau, and the Aruba Meteorological Department. But it's equally important for us, the community, to do our part in preparing for the season.

Reliable information matters

A key piece of advice is to always stay updated through your local meteorological service and the National Hurricane Center. Today, social media has many channels that provide weather information, which can be helpful, but they often lack professionalism and may cause panic, as Mr. Tromp shared.

The panic aspect is particularly difficult for meteorological services to manage. "A lot of disturbances come off Africa, but not all reach us. Some may appear to be heading here in 20 days, but it's still far off, and many things can change in those 20 days," he ex-

plained. Don't panic—stay informed and monitor developments. Our meteorological department will continue monitoring with depth and precision.

Observations for this year

This year, the seasonal trade winds started a bit late, with strong winds only beginning to register about two to three weeks ago. This may suggest that the season "shifted slightly," and in recent years—especially the past three—the hurricane season has started 1 to 2 weeks earlier. That's due to very warm Atlantic waters. "In the past three years, you could already feel the heat between May and June," Mr. Tromp explained.

He also noted that August and September will likely be the hottest months this year, while June, July, and August are expected to be drier months. "Even if it stays dry, a strong hurricane passing near our region—either in the Caribbean or just north of it—can still bring rainy periods. One event can change everything," Mr. Tromp said.

"It only takes one storm to make it a bad season."

We're dealing with nature—anything is possible, even if the chances are small. Aruba lies just outside the "hurricane belt," but experts at the Hurricane Center and climate scientists warn that if temperatures keep rising, this belt could expand. Our only natural advantage is our proximity to the coast, but you never know," Mr. Tromp said.

A key takeaway from the conversation is how essential preparation is, and how important it is for us to remain aware that even if we are "safe" from a direct hurricane hit, other factors or events can still cause damage. That's why preparation is vital so we can be ready to deal with whatever comes our way on the island. □

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Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor



(Oranjestad)—At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a wind-swept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to Find the Anchor?

The anchor is a "must see" landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when your visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at

the "T" junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the Anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos, is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the "fluke" or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the Anchor Come From?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

"According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain."

Story 2:

"Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help.

But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them."

How Did The Anchor Become a Landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis – Owner of Filtec at Zeewijk in San Nicolas), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr. at his famous Charlie's Bar and Restaurant in San Nicolas. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The "anchor", which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the Years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the

origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam Speziale, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery, graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated "To All Seamen" in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The Best Time to Visit

When your planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops.

With that being said, we have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. □

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Birds of Aruba



ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the **Aruba Birdlife Conservation** was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation

publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundation's Facebook page.

The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful



things start happening in nature.

Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.



Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory.

English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male)
Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannelijke).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect. □

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



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

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

fect during family outings around the island, these stands can be found in the following locations:

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

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Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names

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

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

Ayo

Ajo, or Ayo, is a word with Arawak-Indian origin. A (or



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

However, as we now know,

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

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



alike.

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

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; A.

Alto Vista

This word combination can be roughly translated to a 'high point of view' and the

neighborhood received this name from the Hill.

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

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

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; AV. □



Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our "Dorado"

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Dorado", a common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Dorado.

Dorado has many different names it can be referred to. Dral, Dorao, Drals, Drado, are some of them in Papiamentu. In English, it is also called Mahi Mahi, Dolphinfinh, or Dorado. It's a good example to reflect on why there can be many names. The same fish becomes known by different common names, why? Common names come only when a group of people, to understand each other, assign a name to a fish. Mahi Mahi, for example, comes from Hawaii and means "very strong". Dorado is based on Spanish and refers to the golden yellow color that the fish shines with under the sun. Why it's



called Dolphinfinh in English is not well defined and while there are several stories around this, none have been confirmed.

Dorado is found in all tropical to subtropical oceans around the world. Dorado is very popular both for recreational fishing and for consumption. It is known among fishermen as an exciting

catch and a fish that puts up a good fight. Its meat is very good for consumption and it is also commercially fished for that reason.

They grow very fast, up to 2.7 inches (almost 7 cm) per week. They can live up to a maximum of 5 years although very few reach that age. Most become adults

within 1 year but many become reproductive after just 5 or 6 months and reproduce very quickly too.

They live in open water on the surface most of the time. Many fish seek them around sushi lines or floating objects on the sea. Often you will find a group landing together and if you keep a male on the line, often the others will

stay close or can keep the group interested by giving shrimp or squid.

Description:

Dorado has a distinctive body. It has a large tail and its long, flat body ends in a large blunt head. Its color of yellow and green or blue makes it immediately recognizable, even with small variations in these colors.

Dorado has clear differences between adult females and males. The male is larger and can easily reach 50 to 80 pounds and has a much flatter head compared to the female. Therefore, male Dorados are also called "bull Dorado".

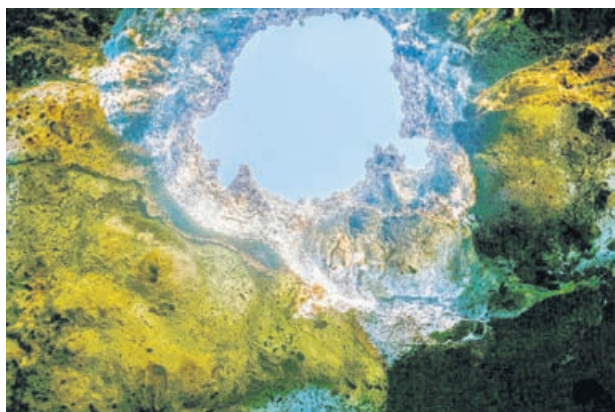
Dorado can be found in our waters around the island all year round, but there are periods when it is easier to find than others. □

Source: The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Nature Calls



The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.arubanationalpark.org

Philip's Animal Garden



To stay with the animals, let's hop to an amazing place. Something different to do, an experience that is to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Welcome to Philip's Animal Garden. We are not talking about a zoo here, this is actually a sanctuary for all types of creatures, from

horses to peacocks, kangaroos to turtles, monkeys, goats, and many, many more different species. The place was founded in 2009 and it is the only organization rescuing and rehabilitating exotic animals in Aruba, which has resulted in an amazing collection of these animals. They provide a suitable living environment for all the rescued animals. Up until now the owner, Philip, has built this shelter with his own efforts; building all the cages from scratch, designing all structures and welding them with his own bare hands. His goal is to upgrade the facilities to a world-class animal shelter with veterinary care and round-the-clock staffs. With the input from the Aruban community and visitors they provide the best care for these animals. Please check out their website for more information: www.philipsanimalgarden.com.

The Lighthouse



No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. www.arubalighthouse.com will give you more information.

Kayak in the Mangroves



Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you

are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several companies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook.

Take an "off-road" sightseeing tour



A must-do activity on the island is for sure taking an off-road sightseeing tour. If you have a rented car, you can drive through the north-eastern side of Aruba and explore the natural pools, caves, rock formations and gorgeous view of the Atlantic Ocean. To access most of these sights, like the natural pool (Conchi) and the Guadirikiri and Fontein caves, you must enter through the Arikok National Park and buy a day pass. Then you drive up the rugged road that leads you through the white dunes, caves and along the wind turbines. Other locations, like the Ayo and Casibari Rock formation are situated more in the center of the island, and are free for guests, 24 hours a day.

Go for a shopping spree in the city center



Need a new bathing suit? Head to the city center of Oranjestad, where there is countless of different stores—both high end and more affordable—that can offer you the service you deserve! Local shopping stores often offer a more affordable price, and have a variety of clothes, shoes, bathing suites, purses and more. Along the Royal Plaza strip, there are numerous jewelry stores with great quality jewelry. In the Renaissance mall, you can shop high-end luxury brands, like Dolce & Gabbana, Kate Spade, Louis Vuitton and more.

Around the high-rise hotel area near Palm Beach, the Paseo Herencia Mall contain a variety of shopping stores, restaurants, small food stands and even a movie theater! □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Gazed

1 Highway divider

7 Frosh's elder

11 Right now

12 Skilled piece

13 Gently jabbed

14 Bike part

15 Periphery

16 Bulldog neighbor

17 Course needs

18 Bow treatments

19 Captured

21 Crafty

22 Swell

25 Upper limit

26 Watch reading

27 Be attentive

29 Bit of rind

33 Diner patron

34 Singer Frankie

35 Shepard in space

36 Plane's place

37 Bakery buy

38 Deep-seated

39 Plops down

DOWN

1 "Olympia" painter

2 Piano piece

3 Avoid

4 Takes in

5 Good pair

6 Homer's neighbor

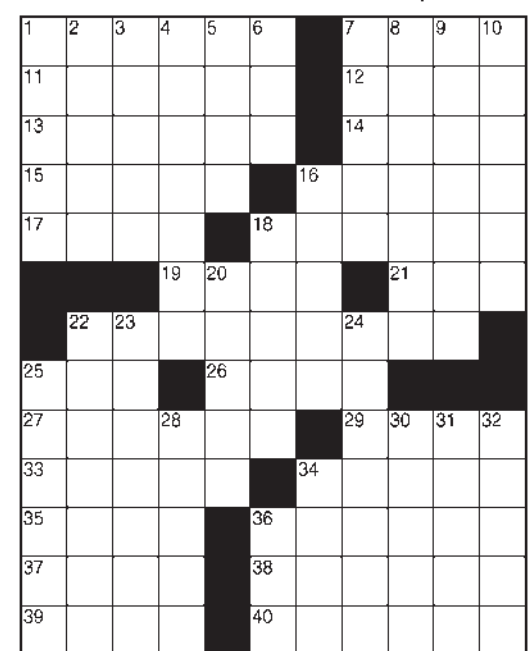
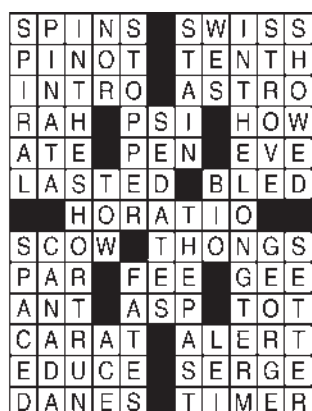
7 Long tales

8 Cleo-patra's Needle, e.g.

9 Without doubt

10 Galileo's crime

16 Abner's surname



6-17

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

6-17

CRYPTOQUOTE

ZRXPMOC ROM XPM ZHOCK

ZOHMJT EYS DRWM RJT XPM

BRCX BYLM YZ EYSO BHZM.

— SJWJYQJ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: GOOD JUDGMENT
EXPERIENCE, AND A LOT OF
THAT COMES FROM BAD JUDGMENT. — WILL
ROGERS

Cruise ship Schedule: June 01 - 27 2025

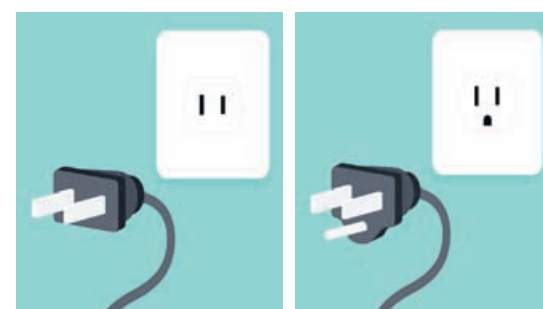
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SUN	01	SILVER SHADOW FREEWINDS - Dept.	08.00 ****	23.00 22.30	C E	1 -
WED	04	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
TUE	10	CARNIVAL HORIZON CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	09.00 13.00	23.00 23.00	C I	1 1
TUE	17	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA	07.00 13.00	16.00 23.00	B C	1 1
WED	18	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00 08.00 07.00	22.00 23.00 16.00	C B I	1 1 1
TUE	24	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
FRI	27	SEVEN SEAS MARINER	10.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

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



Supermarket hours

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



Safety

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



Should you let pets sleep next to you? (Does it even matter what the experts say?)

By **ALBERT STUMM**
Associated Press

It turns out, our furry best friend might be our sleep enemy.

Lots of pet owners let their animals sleep on the bed with them, which usually disrupts sleep. But many would say it's worth it.

And researchers don't necessarily disagree.

Melissa Milanak, a professor at Medical University of South Carolina specializing in sleep health, said most people at her clinic say their pets disturb them often at night.

"You can't say that hands down, it's bad for every single person, but there is a lot out there saying it negatively impacts your sleep," she said.

Generally speaking, having a pet is good for many people's health. Pets have been shown to lower their humans' stress levels, get them to exercise and more. Many pet owners also say they feel an immeasurable amount of comfort by having their pets close as they sleep.

But dogs' and cats' natural sleep cycles aren't the same as those of humans. Dogs tend to be light sleepers and wake up multiple times at night. Some display instinctual behavior like scratching at bedding, which can prevent deeper phases of sleep even if it doesn't wake you up.

As many cat owners know, "the zoomies" often happen before they are ready to get out of bed. Cats evolved to hunt in low light, meaning they are particularly active at dusk and dawn.

Milanak also said allergens such as pet dander and microbes brought into the house can affect owners' breathing, preventing them from getting enough deep sleep.

Brian Chin, a professor of social and health psychology at Trinity College in Connecticut, said his research has found sleeping with pets was associated with poor sleep, "particu-



Thomas, a golden retriever mix, lies on a bed in Westchester County, New York, on July 7, 2024.
Associated Press

larly those dimensions of sleep quality and insomnia symptoms." That's even accounting for the fact that pet owners may be less inclined to report problems in a survey because they don't believe their beloved pets cause problems.

"I hate to even admit that my cat disrupts my sleep at all," said Chin, who has one cat that keeps him awake and another that leaves him alone.

Moreover, a higher number of pets was associated with higher sleep disruption, he said.

What should you do about it?

It's not as simple as telling pet owners that they shouldn't share the bed, Milanak said. For a lot of people, it becomes part of their sleep routine, which makes it difficult to sleep without it because they have come to associate pets with sleep.

Because the topic is sensitive, Milanak asks new patients several questions before getting to whether they sleep with a pet. If they're waking up multiple times a night, for example, they may not realize

why. Once the association is made, she then asks whether they are open to not sleeping together. □



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Kibrahacha: Tel. 583 4908

San Nicolas:

Centro Medico: Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850

Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
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AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
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Movie Review: Can a rom-com be honest about money? Celine Song's smart 'Materialists' gives it a go

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer

The problem with so many rom-coms — one of the problems, anyway — is how often we're asked to conveniently dismiss our knowledge of life's realities. Particularly economic ones.

How does this person live in a spacious, light-filled apartment when they have a beginner's salary, for instance? (In London, or Manhattan!) How can they buy chic designer clothes, or afford those long taxi rides?

By this metric alone, Celine Song's "Materialists" is something else entirely. Song's characters tell us bluntly what their salary is, or how much their apartment costs. Economic reality, in fact, drives the narrative.

Still, it's understandable how one can watch the trailer for "Materialists," with the starry trio of Dakota Johnson, Pedro Pascal and Chris Evans, and feel a little concerned. Especially if you loved "Past Lives," her stunning debut film that ex-



This image released by A24 shows Dakota Johnson, left, and Chris Evans in a scene from "Materialists."

Associated Press

plored not only love and longing but the very idea that our romantic choices, right or wrong, bring lifelong consequences. Compared to that soulful film, "Materialists" looks suspiciously like it could be glossy, superficial and ... OK, loads of fun! But perhaps a bit more Bridget Jones than Celine

Song. Let's look at the similarities, though. Again, Song is writing about a triangle of a woman and two men, each deserving of our empathy and understanding (no cad-like Hugh Grant character here).

And Song, who based "Past Lives" on an experience she

had when contacted by a former love, is again writing what she knows. For six months in New York, while a struggling playwright, she worked for a matchmaking firm. As does Johnson's Lucy, who's good at what she does. Passing a good-looking guy, she stops: "Hey, are you single?" She

offers her card. That man will become a client, and his demands are chilling: at 48, he's ready for a slightly older woman than usual. No, not in her 30s. Even 27 is pushing it. Another man gives the maximum BMI his partner can be. Men are usually the villains here, but women aren't immune to being superficial jerks, either.

But Lucy has somehow beaten the odds. Early in the film, she's being feted at the offices of Adore, the firm she works for: Charlotte and Peter are getting married, and it's the NINTH wedding of Lucy's making! Still, there's one woman whose prospects Lucy despairs of. Sophie (a superb Zoe Winters, both vulnerable and dignified) reports having a wonderful time on her date. Lucy, delighted, calls the man, who did not. "She's 40 and fat," he says. Lucy promises Sophie that she will soon find and marry the love of her life. But privately to her colleague, she admits there may not be a guy who "just wants a nice girl." □

Music Review: Dierks Bentley's 'Broken Branches' offers safe, familiar, cold beer country

By RON HARRIS
Associated Press

Nashville hitmaker Dierks Bentley has delivered "Broken Branches," his eleventh studio album that leans into some well-tread country rock territory, the kind that invariably involves broken hearts, trucks and a cold beer.

Look, Bentley knows what he's doing. The album is 11-tracks of catchy, country rock radio filler and there's not much mystery to its musical roadmap. But therein lies his calling card: Dependable songs with few rough edges.

Thematically, many of the tracks on the superstar's latest effort hint at internal struggles, but allow Bentley and the listener to escape them unscathed. "Jesus



This album cover image released by Capitol Records Nashville shows "Broken Branches: by Dierks Bentley."

Associated Press

Loves Me" is an admirable acoustic slow burn about finding religion but losing a woman.

"Thought maybe if I hit my knees She'd think about hitting the brakes," Bentley sings. There is slight salvation for the Phoenix-born singer: "Yeah, Jesus loves me / But she don't."

On the title track, the jukebox stomp "Broken Branches," Bentley gets a nice assist from fellow country hitmakers John Anderson and Riley Green. Ostensibly it's an energetic drinking song about family lines, but lyrics like "We shoulda gone to college / Coulda gained a little knowledge," which pull from a popular childhood rhyme, feel like they're underperforming.

What Bentley does extremely well is execute what his and the modern genre's biggest fans might expect.

Tales of a tough exterior with a warm, if fragile, heart underneath. But his familiar is derivative.

Palatable country is how you get on the radio and stay on it. Songs about beer and trucks are Spotify deliverables. If you like your country artists with a longer rap sheet, you'll need to look further than "Broken Branches." Even the few attempts at invention don't totally land, like the rowdy, rocking "She Hates Me," which includes a surprising interpolation of post-grunge band Puddle of Mudd's 2001 hit "She (Expletive) Hates Me." □

The U.S. Open at Oakmont is a brutal test that takes a long time

By WILL GRAVES

AP Sports Writer

OAKMONT, Pa. (AP) —

There's a lot to think about at the U.S. Open. Particularly when it visits brawny Oakmont, where danger always seems to be one swing, one bounce, one "wait, where is that putt going to end up?" away.

Good thing or bad thing, depending on who you ask there's plenty of time to think (or overthink).

The physical demands at the sprawling par-70 layout carved into a hilly slice of Western Pennsylvania so big it's divided by an interstate are obvious.

Step into the 5-inch-plus rough and your shoes (not to mention your ball) disappear.

Put too much spin on approach shots to greens so fast and so frustrating that Edward S. Stimpson invented his now-eponymous and ubiquitous tool to measure their actual speed, and the ball may start spinning back toward you and threaten to never stop, as qualifier Will Chandler found out Friday in the second round.

The mental demand of keeping it all together during rounds that can stretch far beyond what the pros encounter during a weekly tour stop can be a little more subtle, but no less daunting.

Scottie Scheffler, Viktor Hovland and Collin Mori-



Sam Burns waits to putt on the 18th hole during the second round of the U.S. Open golf tournament at Oakmont Country Club Friday, June 13, 2025, in Oakmont, Pa.

Associated Press

kawa needed 5 1/2 hours to slog their way through a muggy opening round Thursday. Barely 12 hours after they shook hands on the 18th green, they were back on the 10th tee Friday for the second round, then needed nearly six hours to navigate their way to the ninth green.

"It felt long to me," the top-ranked Scheffler said after a 1-over 71 left him 4 over for the tournament, seven shots behind Sam Burns, who sat at 3-under following a crisp 65.

Yet Scheffler didn't find himself checking his watch too often, not even during waits that stretched to 15

minutes or more between shots.

"I've got too many concerns other than the pace it takes to get around this place," he said with a shrug.

Scheffler and company might have gotten off easy. It took Thriston Lawrence's group well over an hour to play the first three holes as part of the late wave Friday.

Part of the issue at Oakmont is the combination of the layout where players literally have to cross a bridge to get from the first green to the second tee, and again while going from the eighth green to the ninth tee and

the decisions the course forces you to make.

There's typically a backup at the par-4 17th, for example, because at around 300 yards (albeit uphill ones) it's drivable, meaning the group on the green typically has to putt out before the group behind them can go.

Throw in the stakes the lure of golf immortality (or at the very least, a healthy paycheck for making the cut) for the pros and the walk of a lifetime for amateurs like dentist turned qualifier Matt Vogt and yeah, things can drag on a bit.

Hovland's second trip through Oakmont was an

adventure. His 1-under 69 included only eight pars. There was an eagle thanks to a pitch-in on 17, five birdies, three bogeys, and a double.

During a regular tour event, when scores are lower and the pace is a far more palatable 4ish hours, Hovland isn't sure he would have been able to keep things from spiraling out of control after the second, when a poor drive into the right rough was followed by a mangled pitch into a bunker and eventually a double-bogey that threatened to rob him of the momentum he'd build over his first 10 holes.

"If it would have happened at another tournament, for example, I could have potentially lost my mind there a little bit," he said. "But I felt like I kept things together very well."

The fact Hovland had time to let his frustration melt away before his driver on the third tee may have helped.

The 27-year-old Norwegian knows his game well enough to know that he tends to speed things up when a round threatens to go sideways, and not in a good way.

There was no chance of that on Friday.

"Yeah, you might have had a bad hole on the last hole and then you're sitting on the tee box for 10-20 minutes," he said. □

Belmont Stakes to be run at Saratoga Race Course again in 2026, a third time in a row

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. (AP) — The Belmont Stakes is set to be run at Saratoga Race Course in upstate New York for a third consecutive year in 2026.

Gov. Kathy Hochul and the New York Racing Association announced Friday that it will be the third and last time the Triple Crown finale is held there before returning to Belmont Park on Long Island in 2027.

"Saratoga has served our fans and stakeholders extremely well as the temporary home of the Belmont Stakes during the construction of a new Belmont Park on Long Island," NYRA president and CEO David O'Rourke said. "Belmont Park will always be the home of the Belmont Stakes and we look forward to its return to the newly reimagined Belmont in 2027."

It was confirmation of an expected extension of the race's stay at Saratoga while Belmont Park undergoes nearly a half-billion dollar renovation project. It is on track to reopen in September 2026, with the Breeders' Cup returning to New York at Belmont Park in the fall of 2027.

The Belmont will again be run at 1 1/4 miles instead of its traditional 1-1/2 mile distance that has been known as the "test of the champion." That has been the case the past two years, as well, because of the configuration of the main dirt track. □



Sovereignty (2), with jockey Junior Alvarado up, crosses the finish line ahead of Journalism (7), with jockey Umberto Rispoli up, and Baeza (6), with jockey Flavien Prat up, to win the 157th running of the Belmont Stakes horse race, Saturday, June 7, 2025, in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

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Panthers power play production could be an edge in tight Stanley Cup Final against the Oilers



Florida Panthers' Matthew Tkachuk (19) scores against Edmonton Oilers goalie Stuart Skinner, left, as Oilers' Kasper Kapanen (42) defends during the first period in Game 4 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final in Sunrise, Fla., Thursday, June 12, 2025.

Associated Press

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Hockey Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)

— Staying out of the penalty box is a good place to start for all the players involved in the Stanley Cup Final.

After talking all week about being more disciplined,

the Edmonton Oilers were whistled for high-sticking a couple of times and tripping once in the first 16 minutes of Game 4 on Thursday night. Naturally, Matthew Tkachuk scored twice for Florida Panthers, and then a slashing call put the Oil-

ers on the power play and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins' goal sparked their comeback that tied the series.

"It's a good series," Tkachuk said. "Special teams, both teams' power play seemed to be clicking."

Florida is clicking at a higher rate at 33%, going 7 of 21 with the man advantage, compared with 20% on 4 of 20 for Edmonton. In a final knotted 2-2 that has often been as tight as it can be with three games already decided in overtime, the Panthers' power play production has the potential to be a difference-maker.

Until Tkachuk broke through, it had been the second unit of Brad Marchand, Sam Bennett, Carter Verhaeghe, Evan Rodrigues and Nate Schmidt doing most of the damage.

"We're building a lot of chemistry playing together," Verhaeghe said. "We have

so many great players on the unit. Both units have been pretty good. I mean, we just want to move the puck right and get pucks to the net." The Panthers have five power play goals over the past two games and have scored at least one every night in the final. The Oilers have also cracked Sergei Bobrovsky at least once on the power play each game. Nugent-Hopkins scoring Thursday night could be a sign Connor McDavid and Co. are revving up against what has been a fairly effective Florida penalty kill.

Coach Paul Maurice believes that task has gone "reasonably well."

"I think they're still going to generate some action," Maurice said Friday before flying across North America. "I think the even strength chances are pretty tight through four games."

Ekholm's block

Tkachuk almost completed a hat trick in Game 4, and it could have changed the course of the entire series. With the score tied at 3-all late in the second period, he had the puck with a wide-open net to shoot at. Edmonton defenseman Mattias Ekholm got his right skate and leg in front of Tkachuk's shot just in time.

"I didn't even know that the net was empty or anything — I was just in the moment trying to get as big as possible," Ekholm said. "It ended up hitting me. It was obviously a big block at the time. I haven't thought too much more about it. It was a block, and sometimes you need those."

Better Barkov?

Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov picked up his first two points of the series in Game 4 with assists on Tkachuk's power-play goals. He has none at even strength. □