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The return of the silence: How "Quiet Parks" are saving urban sanity



John and Julie Holzauer share a quiet moment during a family visit to a city park on September 30, 2011 in Denver, Colorado.

In the relentless hum of the 21st-century city—a soundscape defined by the roar of transit, the drone of HVAC systems, and the digital pings of a billion smartphones—silence has become the world's most endangered resource.

However, a global movement is rising to reclaim it. Through the designation of "Urban Quiet Parks," cities are beginning to treat silence not as an empty void or a luxury for the elite, but as a critical biological and psychological necessity for urban sanity.

The Vision of Quiet Parks International

The movement is spearheaded by Quiet Parks International (QPI), a non-profit founded in 2019 by world-renowned acoustic ecologist Gordon Hempton and Vikram Chauhan. Hempton, often known as "The Sound Tracker," spent decades recording the world's rarest natural soundscapes before realizing they were rapidly disappearing.

QPI's mission is simple yet profound: "To save quiet for the benefit of all life". While the organization initially focused on remote wilderness like the Zabalo River in Ecuador—the world's first Wilderness Quiet Park—it soon pivoted toward the places where silence is needed most: our densest urban centers.

What is an Urban Quiet Park?

An Urban Quiet Park is not a place of absolute, tomb-like silence. Instead, it is a space where natural sounds—the rustle of leaves, the call of a bird, or the trickle of water—are the dominant acoustic features, largely undisturbed by human-made noise. To receive certification, a park must undergo rigorous acoustic testing. The goal is for background noise to remain below 45 decibels, roughly the level of quiet library chatter. This ensures that visitors can experience what psychologists call "soft fascination"—a state where the mind is gently engaged by natural patterns without the draining demand for focused attention required by urban environments.

A Global Map of Tranquility The "Quiet Revolution" is already visible in major cities across the globe:

Taipei, Taiwan: In 2020,

Yangmingshan National Park became the world's first certified Urban Quiet Park, offering a sanctuary of lush forests and ice-cold springs just outside the bustling capital.

London, UK: Hampstead Heath was recognized in 2021 as Europe's first Urban Quiet Park, providing nearly 800 acres of acoustic refuge only miles from Trafalgar Square.

Stockholm, Sweden: The city has emerged as a leader in the movement, with five parks including Judarskogen and Hansta Nature Reserve receiving certification in 2022.

United States: Recent awards have been presented to Mt. Tabor Park in Portland (2023) and Seward Park in Seattle (2024).

Future evaluations are currently underway for iconic locations such as the Rambles in New York's Central Park, as well as sites in Paris, Toronto, and Brisbane.

The Science of Sanity

The push for quiet parks is backed by a growing body of medical evidence. The World Health Organization (WHO) has long identified noise pollution as a significant contributor to cardiovascular disease, sleep disturbances, and cognitive impairment.

Conversely, even brief exposure to quiet natural settings—as little as 15 to 20 minutes—has been shown to significantly reduce stress hormones like cortisol, lower blood pressure, and boost positive emotions. For urban dwellers, these parks act as "sensory medicine," allowing the nervous system to shift out of "fight-or-flight" mode and into a state of restoration.

Furthermore, these parks are vital for biodiversity. A clean acoustic environment is essential for wildlife that relies on sound for communication, mating, and navigation. Recent studies from King's College London suggest that the more biodiverse a park is, the more profound its mental health benefits are for visitors. □


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Beyond the 'no': The rise of the next generation social impactors

NEW YORK — When John Cronin first entered the job market after leaving school, he was met with a series of closed doors. Like many young adults with Down syndrome, he found that traditional employers often saw his diagnosis before his potential. However, instead of accepting a "no," Cronin decided to build his own "yes."

Today, the 29-year-old co-founder of John's Crazy Socks stands as a symbol of a massive shift in American entrepreneurship. Recently named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 Social Impact Class of 2026, Cronin is the first person with Down syndrome to receive the honor. His story is part of a broader trend: a new generation of "social impactors" who are redefining business success through the lenses of radical inclusivity and shared power.

A Mission Rooted in Happiness

John's Crazy Socks began with a simple mission: to spread happiness. What started as a bootstrapped father-son venture has blossomed into a multi-million-dollar social enterprise that has shipped over 500,000 packages to 94 countries. But the "social impact" isn't just in the colorful patterns. The company's core innovation



Leadership Award Honoree and Co-founder of John's Crazy Socks John Lee Cronin attends the The 2019 2nd Annual ADAPT Leadership Awards at Cipriani 42nd Street on March 14, 2019 in New York City.

lies in its employment model. To date, it has created 34 total jobs, with 22 of those positions held by individuals with differing abilities. By demonstrating that a diverse

workforce is a competitive advantage rather than a charity project, Cronin is challenging the "bureaucracy of low expectations" that often traps disabled workers.

"This isn't just a feel-good story," says Mark X. Cronin, John's father and co-founder. "It's a recognition of leadership, entrepreneurship, and impact at scale".

The 2026 Shift: Diversity by Design

The latest cohort of social innovators reflects a demographic and ideological changing of the guard. According to the 2026 Forbes 30 Under 30 report, this year's list makers have collectively raised over \$3.8 billion in funding—proving that social missions can attract serious capital.

The statistics behind the "Class of 2026" tell a story of intentional diversity:

53% identify as people of color.

39% are women or non-binary individuals.

70% belong to Gen Z, the largest such cohort in the list's history.

This generation is moving past "charity" toward systemic change. Founders like Olivia Zhang

of Cancer Kids First and Adela Ajani of Fem Equity are harnessing digital platforms and AI to tackle disparities in healthcare and pay equity. Unlike previous eras where social impact was a "side effort," these entrepreneurs are embedding purpose into their core business infrastructure.

The "Prove-It" Era

As we move into mid-2026, social impact is entering what practitioners call its "prove-it" era. With tighter resources and higher public scrutiny, the focus has shifted from feel-good storytelling to "decision science".

"Expectations are higher, and tolerance for actions that don't lead to results is declining," notes Brian Tipples, a social impact strategist. This new rigor is visible in how young founders measure success—not by volunteer hours, but by economic mobility, career trajectories, and data-driven outcomes.

Leading with "Abilities Rising"

For John Cronin, the Forbes recognition is just a springboard. He recently launched Abilities Rising, a family of ventures focused on disability-owned publishing, workplace inclusion, and mission-driven e-commerce. His goal is to ensure that the "no" he received years ago becomes a relic of the past for the next generation.

"Being a Special Olympics athlete helped make this possible," John shared in a recent statement. His journey proves that when a business is built on the belief that "ability is something we should expand, not limit," the impact can truly change the world. □

Weight-loss medication linked to lower risk of drug addiction: study

Paris, France

Taking a new generation of weight-loss medication is linked to a significantly lower risk of addiction and death from drugs such as cocaine and alcohol, a large U.S. study suggested on Thursday.

The massively popular drugs known as GLP-1 agonists could even halve people's risk of dying from a range of harmful substances, according to the research published in the BMJ journal on Thursday.

However outside experts urged caution in interpreting the results, which do not establish a causal link, calling for clinical trials to find out more.

As GLP-1 drugs such as Ozempic have transformed

the treatment of diabetes and obesity in recent years, they have also shown signs of helping with a surprising variety of health problems -- including addiction.

The US team of researchers analysed the medical records of more than 600,000 people with type 2 diabetes in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' healthcare database who took either GLP-1s or an older kind of diabetes drug.

The researchers then looked at the effect of drugs including alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, nicotine and opioids over three years.

For veterans who already had a drug addiction, taking GLP-1s had a 50-percent lower rate of death and a 40-percent lower rate of

overdose.

The rate of emergency department visits was more than 30 percent lower, while hospital admissions and suicidal thoughts or attempts were down by a quarter.

Among veterans with no history of drug addiction, taking GLP-1s was linked with a 14-percent lower risk of developing one.

- 'Quite a surprise' -

Ziyad Al-Aly, an epidemiologist at Washington University in St. Louis and the study's senior author, told AFP it was "quite a surprise" how many substance-use disorders the GLP-1s appeared to prevent.

"The effect was not confined to one substance, it was evident across the board for



all addictive substances," he told AFP.

The research is observational, so cannot directly prove that the GLP-1s caused the results seen in the study.

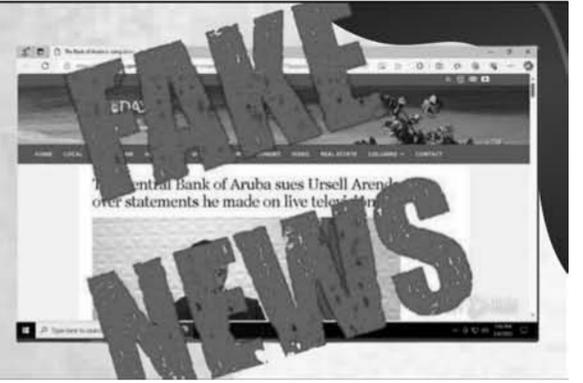
And exactly how these appetite-suppressing drugs could fight addiction remains unclear. However

there have been suggestions they could have an impact on how our brains reward certain behaviours. The researchers also warned that the participants were mostly older white men -- though the results appeared consistent for women as well. □

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Freedom Trucks: The 250th Anniversary tour begins



WASHINGTON, D.C. — As the United States marches toward its 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026, a new fleet of "mobile museums" is hitting the open road to bring the story of American independence directly to the people. Known as the Freedom Trucks, these six state-of-the-art 18-wheelers launched their nationwide tour in early 2026, transforming school parking lots, library plazas, and town squares into immersive historical sanctuaries.

A Modern Legacy

The Freedom Trucks are inspired by the legendary Freedom Train that crisscrossed the nation during the 1976 Bicentennial, which allowed millions of Americans to see founding documents up close. This modern iteration, however, swaps rail lines for the interstate highway system to reach deeper into rural and "forgotten" areas of all 48 contiguous states. Sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in partnership with the Freedom 250 initiative, the project aims to reach over 20 million Americans before the year is out. "The Freedom Trucks bring American history out of textbooks and into communities, classrooms, and workplaces," noted Department of Labor Deputy Secretary Keith Sonderling during the tour's kickoff.

History Brought to Life

Inside each double-wide trailer, visitors find a sophisticated blend of original historical artifacts and cutting-edge technology:

AI Portraits: Upon entering, guests are greeted by an AI-powered portrait of George Washington that "comes to life" to narrate the challenges of the Revolutionary War.

Interactive Storytelling: Exhibits detail the harrowing journey of the 13 colonies as they declared independence and defeated the British Empire.

Digital Engagement: Visitors can take a "Loyalist or Patriot?" quiz to see where they would have stood in 1776 and digitally add their own signatures to the Declaration of Independence.

The Wall of Heroes: The tour concludes with a tribute to 50 "American Heroes" spanning the nation's history—from Founding Fathers to civil rights icons like Rosa Parks, innovators like the Wright Brothers, and cultural legends like Aretha Franklin.

Rolling Through the Heartland

The tour officially kicked off on January 21, 2026, with its first stop in Greensboro, North Carolina. Since then, the trucks have been weaving through the South and Midwest, making notable appearances at the Florida State Fair in Tampa and the

NRB Convention in Nashville. In early March, the tour arrived in South Carolina, where project managers emphasized the mission of making history accessible to students who will "carry the American story forward". Upcoming stops include historic Middletown, Virginia, where a truck will be stationed at the Wayside Inn on March 27–28.

A Unifying Mission

The Freedom Trucks are just one pillar of the broader Salute to America 250 Task Force, which includes landmark events like the Great American State Fair and the International Naval Review. The trucks aim to spark a "civic renewal" at a time when many Americans struggle with basic civics knowledge. By bringing history to 1,000 local schools and libraries, the IMLS hopes to reignite a shared sense of national pride and purpose. "This initiative embodies the mission to unite our nation and encourage reflection on the values that continue to guide us today," said Jennifer Condon, Executive Vice President at America250. As the fleet continues its cross-country journey, it serves as a moving reminder that the American story is still being written—and that every citizen, from the smallest town to the largest city, has a place in it. □

The Philadelphia "superhero" restoring dignity one load at a time



Worker Shane Grady collects a resident's laundry being washed for free at the Tide Loads of Hope mobile laundromat set up for those affected by Hurricane Isaac on September 6, 2012 in LaPlace, Louisiana

In the heart of Philadelphia, where an estimated 5,000 unhoused residents navigate the daily struggle of life on the streets, 45-year-old Joe Richardson is providing more than just a service—he is providing a fresh start. Operating under the name Spin & Go, Richardson drives a custom-fitted trailer-mounted mobile laundromat to neighborhoods like Kensington several times a week to wash, dry, and fold clothes for the city's homeless population for free.

A Vision Born in Confinement

The seeds of this mission were planted over a decade ago. While serving a 14-year prison sentence, Richardson conceived the idea in 2010 after observing how frequently vulnerable individuals had their few possessions stolen in traditional laundromats. Upon his release in 2021, he began working for his family's laundry business, but a personal tragedy in 2023—the shooting death of his 28-year-old brother—shifted his priorities toward a more fulfilling path of service.

Restoring More Than Just Fabric

For those living on the streets, access to clean clothing is a rare luxury that directly impacts mental well-being and self-worth.

The Impact: One resident, Beatrice, described Richardson as a "superhero" while he assisted her at Arch and Broad Streets.

A "Blessing": Another recipient noted that simply having clean clothes helped them "feel better about myself".

Systemic Need: While Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services works to expand shelter capacity by 1,000 beds in 2026, grassroots efforts like Spin & Go fill a critical immediate gap for those who cannot access fixed facilities like the Hub of Hope.

Community Solidarity

Richardson's work has sparked a wave of support, with local residents frequently reaching out to donate soap, fabric softener, and fuel to keep the machines running. For Richardson, the work is "second nature" and a way to heal through community care. □

Silent sentinels of the Highlands: Decoding Armenia's mysterious 'Dragon Stones'

YEREVAN, Armenia — High in the windswept alpine pastures of the Armenian Highlands, massive basalt monoliths stand as silent witnesses to a civilization that vanished millennia ago. Known locally as vishapakars or "dragon stones," these enigmatic stelae have long puzzled archaeologists. However, a series of groundbreaking studies published in late 2025 and early 2026 has finally begun to pierce the fog of prehistoric mystery surrounding these 6,000-year-old giants.



Ancient Guardians of the Water

The "Dragon Stones" are unique to the Armenian Highland, with approximately 150 known specimens of which reside within the borders of modern Armenia. Standing up to 18 feet (5.5 meters) tall and weighing several tons, these monoliths were crafted from local volcanic rock like basalt and andesite. Archaeologists categorize them into three distinct types:

Piscis: Carved and polished into the literal shape of a fish.

Vellus: Shaped like a stretched or draped bovid (bull) hide.

Hybrida: Rare specimens that combine both fish and bull iconography.

For centuries, local folklore linked these stones to vishaps

mythical serpentine or dragon-like creatures believed to control storms and water. Legend tells of the thunder god Vahagn, the "Dragon Reaper," who battled these spirits to release life-giving rain for the parched valleys below.

Cracking the 6,000-Year-Old Mystery

Recent research led by Vahe Gurzadyan of Yerevan State University and Arsen Bobokhyan of the Institute of Archaeology and

Ethnography has shifted the narrative from myth to prehistoric science. By performing the first comprehensive statistical and spatial analysis of 115 vishaps, the team discovered that these stones were not random markers.

The study revealed a deliberate "sacred map" of water. The stones are meticulously positioned near mountain springs, snowmelt streams, and prehistoric irrigation systems. This confirms that the vishaps were the centerpieces of a sophisticated "water cult" that sacralized the mountain summits where water the foundation of survival was "born" from the snow.

A Feat of Prehistoric Engineering

Perhaps most shocking is the sheer effort required to create them. Radiocarbon dating at the Tirinkatar site on Mount Aragats has pushed their origins back to the Chalcolithic period, between 4200 and 4000 B.C. making them older than Stonehenge.

Statistical data shows that these ancient communities defied the "logic of minimal effort". Instead of getting smaller at higher, harder-to-reach elevations, some of the largest and most labor-intensive stones are found at altitudes of 9,000 feet.

Extreme Heights: Stones cluster at two specific altitudes roughly 6,200 feet and 8,800 feet.

Massive Weight: Single stones weighing over six tons were hauled miles up steep volcanic slopes during the brief, snow-free summer months.

Intricate Detail: Unlike European menhirs, vishaps are fully worked and polished on all sides, featuring sophisticated carvings of eyes, gills, and flowing motifs.

Burials and Rituals

In a dramatic discovery in 2024, archaeologists unearthed two infant burials beneath a dragon stone at the Lchashen site near Lake Sevan. This find provides powerful evidence that the stones were not just territorial markers but served a deeply sacred, ritual function for the first complex societies of the highlands.

Preserving a Petrified Faith While many vishaps remain in remote mountain ranges like the Geghama and Aragats, several have been moved to accessible locations in Yerevan, including the Nor Nork district and near the Matenadaran. □

Against all currents: The miracle return of 'Freda' the lost sea-blade

EAST YORKSHIRE, UK — For Brenda Ogden, a 69-year-old retired nurse, a rogue wave in April 2025 felt like it had stolen more than just a piece of medical equipment; it had taken a hard-won piece of her independence. After a car crash in 2021 led to the amputation of her left leg, she had joined the Flamborough Flippers swimming group to challenge herself. She had specifically waited over a year for a custom-made, £2,000 titanium waterproof blade which she nicknamed "Freda" to help her return to the ocean.

However, during her very first attempt at an open-water swim in Bridlington, a powerful wave knocked her off her feet, sweeping



the brand-new limb into the North Sea before she or her friends could grab it.

The Long Wait

For 10 months, Ogden mourned the loss of the prosthesis, which she described as being as comfortable as "putting slippers on". She had largely given

up hope, assuming the currents had carried it as far as Scandinavia. During this time, she was unable to return to the sea, feeling "grounded" by the loss of her specialized equipment.

A Fossil Hunter's "Bizarre" Find

The miracle occurred in February 2026 when Elizabeth "Lizi" Forbes, a 38-year-old fossil hunter, was walking along the Holderness coast near Atwick—about 12 miles (19km) from where the leg was originally lost. Initially mistaking the object for a gas canister or an "upside down lemonade bottle," Forbes soon realized she was looking at a high-tech prosthetic limb wedged among the rocks. Curiously, the leg even still had its sock attached to the foot.

Forbes posted a photo of the "bizarre" find to a local fossil-hunting Facebook group. Within hours, the image reached Ogden's friends and family, who immediately recognized "Fre-

da".

A Positive Closure

The two women were reunited on the same beach where the leg had vanished. Despite being battered by 10 months in the salt water, the titanium blade remained largely intact.

"I just thought that was the end of it and I'd never, ever see it again," Ogden told the BBC. "I'm going to be able to [swim] now, so that is absolutely brilliant".

For Forbes, the discovery provided a sense of "positive closure" and sparked a new friendship. For Ogden, it was a reminder that even when the sea takes something away, sometimes, against all odds, it gives it back. □

Grooming makes Crufts debut as U.K. dog show widens offer

Birmingham, United Kingdom

With her nose pointing high in the air, back arched and legs suitably astride, Raven stood proud on the grooming table as an expert judge appraised her condition.

The five-year-old charcoal standard poodle had been on the table nearly two-and-a-half hours, but remained calm and obedient to owner and professional groomer Amie Gale. "She's got a shaved face, her ears are nice and short and she's also got the terrier-style tail," the 41-year-old explained Thursday as she awaited the judge's verdict, noting that symmetry and balance were all-important.

Unfortunately for Raven and Gale, it was not their day competing in Crufts' inaugural "grooming championships".

But there will likely be other chances down the line, with the competition a new feature of Britain's world-famous annual dog show as it broadens its offerings amid the exploding popularity in everything canine.

"When I heard about this I was straight on it," Gale told AFP, on participating in the "open" grooming cate-



A handler works on a poodle during the dog grooming championships on the first day of the Crufts dog show at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, central England, on March 5, 2026.

gory, which is sandwiched between intermediate and champion class for groomers.

"It's absolutely brilliant to be able to bring it into more of the public eye," the professional dog sculptor added, explaining that she would normally be at Crufts to market her work anyway.

On the next table, Joanna Tofts, 33, who has given her 18-month-old miniature poodle Koda a so-called Scandinavian trim often used at shows, agreed

wholeheartedly.

"This is great, because it's showing the general public what we do, and hopefully educating them a little bit on us as groomers and us as professionals, and making them appreciate our industry."

- 'Fun' -

Crufts, founded in 1891 and run by The Kennel Club, has been gradually expanding its competitions and offerings to the tens of thousands of visitors who flock to Birmingham's National

Exhibition Centre (NEC) over four days each year. It expects to welcome up to 150,000 people to this year's showcase, which culminates in Sunday's "Best in Show" awarding. As much as a contest, it is also a convention for the industry, with everything from pet food retailers to dog clubs taking exhibition stands.

Meanwhile an increasingly interested public are being encouraged to participate in things like Crufts' "have a

go" sessions.

Held across different categories like agility and obedience, it gives attendees a light-hearted chance to find out what life is like in the show-ring with a dog whose owner has volunteered their services.

Sisters Harriet and Chiron Tait, dog-owners who live in nearby Birmingham and were at Crufts for the first time, were among those to enrol.

They each picked a dog to handle in one of the vast event's smaller rings.

"It was good fun," said Harriet, 22, a small dogs fan who chose to handle a Border Terrier named Alfie.

"It was easier than I thought it'd be to be honest -- the dog is obviously well-trained," she told AFP.

"We had to put the dog on the table as if someone was judging it, and then take it round in a triangle," she explained. "I give him a treat as well!"

Alfie's owner Anne Speake, 57, who has been handling dogs at contests for two decades, welcomed the initiative. It also gave Alfie a nice warm-up ahead of his official Crufts performance on Saturday as he bid to be best in breed in the terrier group. □

Endangered Iberian lynx population doubles in three years

Madrid, Spain

The number of endangered Iberian lynx in the wild in Spain and Portugal

has nearly doubled since 2020 to surpass 2,000 last year, the Spanish government said Friday.

A total of 722 lynx were born in 2023 bringing their total number in the two countries to 2,021, a record high since monitoring of the species began and up from 1,111 just three years earlier, Spain's environment ministry said in a statement.

This rise "allows us to continue to be optimistic about the reduction of the risk of extinction of the Iberian lynx," it added.

Known for its pointy ears, long legs and leopard-like spotted fur, the species was on the brink of extinction just two decades ago due to poaching, road accidents and encroachment on their habitat by urban development, as well as a dramatic decline

due to disease in wild rabbits numbers, the lynx's main prey.

When the first census of the spotted nocturnal cat was carried out in 2002, there were fewer than 100 specimens in the Iberian Peninsula.

The ministry party attributed the boom in lynx numbers to the success of a captive breeding and reintroduction programme launched in 2011. Since then, 372 lynx born in captivity have been released into the wild.

"The recovery of the Iberian lynx population in Spain and Portugal constitutes one of the best examples of conservation actions for endangered species in the

world," it said.

The ministry said the Iberian lynx population has continued to rise since 2015, when the International Union for Conservation of Nature downgraded the threat level to "endangered" from "critically endangered" its highest category before extinction in the wild.

Most Iberian lynx can be found in the Donana national park and Sierra Morena mountains in the southwestern region of Andalusia, but the conservation programme has reintroduced captive-bred animals to the Spanish regions of Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura and Murcia, as well as Portugal. □



One of two female Iberian lynxes (Lynx pardinus), named Vouga and Valeriana, from the Silves breeding centre, managed by the Portuguese government, walks after the animals' release in Astudillo, Palencia province, northern Spain, on April 29, 2025.

Origin of Papiamentu- Aruba's native language

ORANJESTAD — Papiamentu, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (linings and slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean. Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting stories, wanting to link Papiamentu directly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamentu, on Wikipedia – Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamentu), in fact, this is not true. Papiamentu is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You can see this best when it's saying obscene words and offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands.

The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch. Also the Papi Cristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last two releases to the English), all originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable – Verdeans (linings and slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quinrentist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study from primary education to higher education. However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time, that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermini Mountains, but not much speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillans and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamentu, Papi Cristang, Patuá Macaense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some



places in Indonesia, are and indirectly the Galaico-Duriense or Galaico-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century. □

Source: Dushi Aruba



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Rock stacking and its harmful effects



(Oranjestad)—The organization Aruba Birdlife Conservation has in the past raised concerns about the phenomenon of “rock stacking” in the area of Baby Beach and warned about the dangers it poses, especially for children.

As known, “rock stacking” is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small

animal species living in Aruba’s wilderness. Experts warn that “rock stacking” could even lead certain species to extinction.

In Aruba, much of the “rock stacking” also occurs near Arikok National Park. Although this activity is not illegal in Aruba, it may be time for park authorities to impose stricter regulations on this activity.

Tourists often believe that

the meaning behind this activity is making a wish, but they do not realize its negative impact.

Aruba Birdlife Conservation’s post not only raises alarms about the activity but also now that this phenomenon has reached Baby Beach, some of the stacked stone towers are up to 1.7 meters high, which can be very dangerous, especially for children. □

Dining in? Try making some local favorites! How to make “pan bati”



(Oranjestad)—If you’re ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here’s how to make it!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of all purpose flour
- 1 cup grams of fine cornmeal
- 2 tbsp baking powder
- 1 1/3 cup of milk
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp of granulated sugar
- Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □



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Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset? Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest points easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot

all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—

it can only be described as an experience!

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If



you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.hue.□

Kurt and Norma celebrate 35 years coming to Aruba!



(Oranjestad)—Kurt and Norma are back on the island, this time celebrating 35 years of consecutive visits to Aruba. We at Aruba Today want to give them a shout out for their dedication to our tiny paradise!

Norma and Kurt are both from Montreal, Canada, with Kurt originally from Germany. These two are no strangers to Aruba Today, as they have been featured in our old segment called Beauty and Beach, where we captured Captain Kurt with his famous captain hat.

This year, they had two things to celebrate: 35 years of visiting Aruba...and Kurt's birthday! That's right; Kurt celebrated his 85th birthday in late January among friends and family.

"We now spend our winters here and hope to continue doing so. We love Aruba and its beautiful people," they said.

Thank you Norma and Kurt for their unwavering dedication and love for Aruba! □



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Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko

The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the

way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4-5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Cododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the is-



land. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Cododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole



The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.

Aruba: the legend behind its name



(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the

clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the

sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curaçao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they

ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent

his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can be laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribees attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock.

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 36 Bothered

1 Narrow 38 Flower

5 Recipe girl, often instruction 39 T choice

9 Ready 40 Invites for bed 41 Purposes

11 Insertion sign

13 Justice Samuel

14 Take for — (trick)

15 Ethane, e.g.

16 Yoga studio greeting

18 Swimming groups

20 Egg layer

21 Extra

22 Order to Spot

23 Hosp. areas

24 Be litigious

25 "Damn it!"

27 Capital on the Nile

29 Nest egg acct.

30 Fit

32 It doesn't call for drawing

34 "Give — rest!"

35 Down-loadable read



DOWN

1 Some deer

2 Fragrant flowers

3 Spuds

4 Ran into

5 Cons

6 Scarlett's home

7 Some show dogs

8 Drink made from rooibos

10 Gen-erous folks

12 Minute

17 Bar

19 Crew members

22 Dia-monds, e.g.

24 Casual shoe

25 Mature

26 Mideast region

27 Soup buy

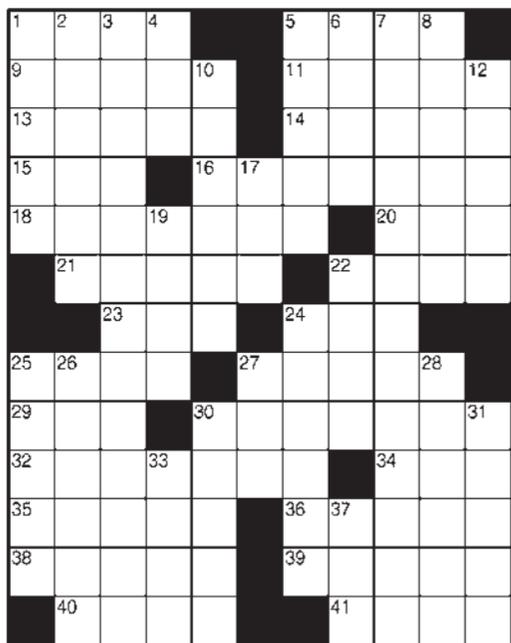
28 Power problem

30 Confis-cates

31 Crew members

33 Pawn

37 Letter after sigma



3-17

A XYDLBAAXR 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.

3-17 CRYPTOQUOTE

VXA ANPM INLJDUK FD ZDXOA

XTR ANPM ZDXMU FD BSQZU.

VXA QNNR BPLJ IPMKPD ANP

DXLZ VNMTSTQ XTR TSQZU.

— SMSKZ FBDKKSTQ

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			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	03	CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	B	1
		SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR	10.30	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	13.30	22.30	I	1
WED	04	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	****	B	1
		AMBASSADOR SHIP 3	09.00	18.00	C	1
		BRILLIANT LADY	10.00	22.00	I	1
THU	05	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS - Dept.	****	18.00	B	-
		MAJESTIC PRINCESS	07.00	16.00	C	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	I	1
FRI	06	CARNIVAL GLORY	09.00	22.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN STAR	11.00	20.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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



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.



Safety

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

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

		3			1	4		
8	4		7					
1	6					5		8
		5			6	9		
		6	8		3			5
								1
								4
		4		7		2	9	
	8				5	3		

Difficulty: ★★★★★

3/6

Answer to previous puzzle

6	9	2	5	1	4	3	8	7
5	3	1	6	8	7	9	2	4
4	8	7	9	3	2	1	5	6
2	5	8	3	4	9	6	7	1
1	6	3	7	2	5	8	4	9
7	4	9	1	6	8	5	3	2
3	7	5	2	9	1	4	6	8
9	2	4	8	5	6	7	1	3
8	1	6	4	7	3	2	9	5

Difficulty: ★★★

3/5

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Sci-fi without AI: Oscar nominated 'Arco' director prefers human touch

Beverly Hills, United States

Oscar-nominated animated film "Arco" tells the story of a young boy in a future where humanity lives in harmony with nature, far from the robots and artificial intelligence shaping our present.

For first-time director Ugo Bienvenu, who drew the whole film by hand, there was never any chance he would resort to using AI.

"That's why I make science fiction," the French director told AFP. "It was to say to this generation: 'Maybe there are other paths, maybe there are other things to imagine.'"

The graphic novel illustrator, 38, says he is alarmed by society's increasing dependence on artificial intelligence, which he insists is inferior to the things it is being used to replace.

"It's like wanting to saw off your own leg just because you have a great crutch," he said.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the body that will hand out the Oscars in Hollywood on March 15, last year updated its rules to say it was neutral on the technology. "Generative Artificial Intelligence and other digital tools... neither help nor harm the chances of achieving a nomination," it said in April.

"The Academy and each branch will judge the achievement, taking into account the degree to which a human was at the heart of the creative authorship."

- 'Nobody really wants to use it' -

The move came after a furor over the use of AI in best picture contenders "The Brutalist" where Adrien Brody's Hungarian accent was artificially smoothed out and "Dune: Part Two," in which certain characters had their eye color changed.

This season, two Oscar-eligible animated shorts openly acknowledged their use of AI, but did not get a nomination.

For Bienvenu, the reliance



French director Ugo Bienvenu, director, co-writer, and producer of Best Animated Feature Film nominee "Arco" poses during a photo session ahead of the 98th Oscars Nominees Luncheon at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, California on February 10, 2026.

on AI in the creative process is dangerous because it risks allowing the imagination to wither.

"If we tell ourselves that the machine will do it for us, we never make the mistakes that allow us to access our subconscious" where true creativity lies, he said.

Bienvenu, who spoke to AFP on the sidelines of the Oscars nominees luncheon in Beverly Hills last month, said many conversations at the gathering had touched on the use of AI in filmmaking a key sticking point in the writers' and actors' strikes that crippled Hollywood in 2023.

"Everyone is more or less on the same page," he said. "Nobody really wants to use it."

- 'Human' -

In January, more than 800 creatives, including actresses Scarlett Johansson and Cate Blanchett, as well as director Guillermo Del Toro, published an open letter accusing AI giants of "theft."

The Mexican filmmaker, whose "Frankenstein" is competing this year for the best picture Oscar, in 2022 said animation created by AI is an "insult to life itself." Bienvenu shares that

alarm. "The real danger is that we... become weaker intellectually," he says.

"It's not about protecting our jobs, it's about what makes us human." □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Voice coach to the stars says Aussie actors nail tricky accents

Sydney, Australia

Geoffrey Rush, Rose Byrne, Cate Blanchett -- voice coach Victoria Mielewska has trained some of Australia's most famous thespians in the delicate art of the accent and says actors from Down Under have a unique talent for getting it right.

Byrne, a native of the greater Sydney area, is vying for the best actress Oscar this month for her powerhouse role as an overwhelmed mother in "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You".

So uncannily convincing is her American accent that some have expressed shock that she is in fact Australian.

"She masters that American absolutely beautiful accent that she does," Mielewska, who worked with Byrne on the 2022 comedy "Seriously Red", told AFP at her home in Sydney's leafy north.

"She's worked quietly and beautifully for many years." For Mielewska whose company Creative Voice trains everyone from actors to business executives in speaking teaching an actor an accent is much more than just an impression. The actor must learn to really live in the physicality of the voice.

"I work in quite a vulner-



Voice coach Victoria Mielewska speaks during an interview with AFP in her home in Sydney on March 2, 2026.

able, free way," she explained.

"The ultimate goal is not to listen to an actor at work and not to listen to the accent, but for them to be able to work with it and through it to get the truth of the work."

- 'Gym in your mouth' -

To go American, Mielewska said it's all about getting the Rs and the vowels right. "It's very intricate, an American accent," she told AFP, describing it as "very muscular".

"If I'm working with an Australian who is doing an American accent, I will say, 'You have to start going to the gym in your mouth'." It's as much about where one's tongue sits in the mouth as it is about their seating posture, Mielewska explained.

A Midwestern twang is "a very feet on the ground, back in the heels of your boots type of accent", she said.

And what about the classic English "received pro-

nunciation", long the go-to sound of the British ruling class?

"I'd get them to sit back in the chair... you actually feel that there's a lot of space between you," she said Australian actors can nail the US accent in part because Americans' natural way of speaking echoes the Antipodean approach to life more relaxed and, in some ways, "lazy", Mielewska said.

"Australians can do American pretty well by and large, because we come

from a fairly neutral place," she said.

"Australians can go from something that's kind of midline and relaxed and start to work with it, and the muscles respond in time."

- Tongue twisters -

It's not always so easy the other way round.

For years, some of Hollywood's biggest stars have endured mockery for mangled attempts at accents from Don Cheadle as a Cockney in "Ocean's Eleven" to Leonardo DiCaprio playing a Rhodesian (modern-day Zimbabwean) in "Blood Diamond". Some Americans, Mielewska said, are unfairly maligned.

Meryl Streep's turn as wrongfully accused mother Lindy Chamberlain in the true story 1988 film "Evil Angels" ("A Cry in the Dark" in its US release) -- and her often-misquoted line "a dingo took my baby" -- has sometimes inspired ridicule in Australia.

But Mielewska said that, contrary to popular belief, Streep got it bang on -- Chamberlain was born in New Zealand, and her accent is not typically Aussie. Australian is also uniquely incompatible with the American lilt, she said. □



Ferrari's British driver Lewis Hamilton poses for a portrait ahead of the Formula One Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne's Albert Park on March 5, 2026.

Melbourne, Australia Lewis Hamilton revealed Thursday he was working on a sequel to the blockbuster Brad Pitt film 'F1: The Movie', with a script being written.

The film released last year starred Pitt and Damson Idris and was directed

by Joseph Kosinski, who made 'Top Gun: Maverick' among others.

Producers included Jerry Bruckheimer and seven-time world champion Hamilton.

"We are already working on the first script," the Ferrari driver said in

Hamilton reveals sequel in the works to blockbuster 'F1: The Movie'

Melbourne ahead of the season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

"We had our first meeting maybe mid-to-late the second part of the end of the year me, Jerry and Joe talking about different ideas, different directions that we could go with the script.

"So it's really exciting. I'm super excited. Now I've been through it, and it was already very intense the first time going. Now I'm used to it. So I know what to expect."

In the first film, Pitt played a grizzled veteran brought in to shore up a foundering Formula One team run by his one-time teammate,

played by Javier Bardem.

The team's talented rookie driver (Idris) resented the older man, with their difficult relationship forming the emotional backbone. It was a huge hit, raking in more than US\$630 million worldwide.

"It's been amazing to see how big an impact it's had, how many people have loved the movie," said Hamilton.

"I'm still getting texts from people who are still only just watching the movie and how it's opened their eyes up to what this sport is about

"Sequels often aren't always great," he added.

"But we've got a great team, got a great cast, great writer. So I'm not concerned about that. "But we're going to take our time and make sure we get it just the way it needs to be."

Asked if he might be tempted to have a role in the sequel, he replied: "I don't really have a lot of desire to be on camera, and I've had loads of opportunities to be in movies. "I really liked the idea of being in the background. It was an amazing experience, and it's so much more enjoyable, I think, than actually being on camera." □

Gilgeous-Alexander rules over Knicks again in Thunder win

Los Angeles, United States

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander sank a clutch three-pointer to secure a hard-fought 103-100 win for the Oklahoma City Thunder over the New York Knicks Wednesday.

Victory improved the reigning NBA Most Valuable Player's remarkable personal record at Madison Square Garden against the Knicks to 7-0, and a fourth straight team win extended the Thunder's lead on top of the Western Conference.

"We got the car back on the road in the fourth quarter, we were able to give ourselves a chance," said Gilgeous-Alexander, who finished with 26 points plus eight assists.

"Late game, you've just got to figure it out. I made plays. Guys made plays. We still got here with a W." Oklahoma City had led for much of the game. Chet Holmgren top-scored with 28 points, including 22 in a sensational first half. The Knicks were restricted to just 40 points in the



Chet Holmgren #7 of the Oklahoma City Thunder goes to the basket against Mikal Bridges #25 of the New York Knicks during the second quarter at Madison Square Garden on March 04, 2026 in New York City.

first half by some clinical Thunder defending, with New York's star man Jalen Brunson managing just two points under intense marking before the midway break.

But the Knicks poured in 40 more in the third quarter alone, with a reinvigorated

Brunson's three-pointer finally drawing the scores level and bringing the home crowd roaring to life. The Knicks took a slender lead into the final stretch, but the advantage did not last, as Gilgeous-Alexander and Holmgren rallied.

With barely a minute re-

maining, a step back jump shot by Gilgeous-Alexander opened up a seven-point gap. Brunson closed it to three, but with just six seconds remaining, his game-tying attempt from beyond the arc just missed.

"It's always great to come

away with a win. No better place to do it than the Mecca," said Holmgren.

The win puts the defending champions on an NBA-best 49-15, three-and-a-half games clear of the San Antonio Spurs, and with their eyes firmly on the playoffs. "You got to get healthy, because we're going to need everyone for this playoff run," said Gilgeous-Alexander.

"And then we just got to keep doing what we're doing. We got to stay together. We got to be the team we've been the last year and a half."

The Knicks remain third in the Eastern Conference, and did not lose ground on the second-placed Boston Celtics, who fell 118-89 to the red-hot Charlotte Hornets. Kon Knueppel bagged 20 points in another impressive showing from the Hornets rookie, while Derrick White's 29 points for the Celtics were in vain.

It was Charlotte's sixth straight win by 15 or more points, the joint-second longest streak of its kind in NBA history. □

Australia beat Taiwan in World Baseball Classic opener

Tokyo, Japan

Australia got the World Baseball Classic underway with a 3-0 win over a Taiwan team cheered on by thousands of passionate fans in Tokyo in Thursday's opening game.

Home runs from Robbie Perkins and Major League Baseball prospect Travis Bazzana got the 20-team international tournament started with a bang in front of a crowd of over 40,000 at the Tokyo Dome.

The overwhelming majority was supporting Taiwan, and Australia manager Dave Nilsson said it was "good we scored first to kind of limit the noise a little bit".

"I thought it was a good baseball day all round and we came out on the right side of it," he said.

Pool C also includes defending champions Japan

as well as South Korea and the Czech Republic, with all games being played in Tokyo.

South Korea beat the Czechs, whose team mostly features amateur players, 11-4 later on Thursday. Pool-stage games at the tournament are also being played in Puerto Rico and mainland United States, before the action moves to Miami and Houston from the quarter-finals onwards. Japan, led by Los Angeles Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani, do not begin their campaign until they play Taiwan on Friday but there was still plenty of interest in Tokyo.

Thousands of blue-clad Taiwan fans packed out the stands, singing songs, blowing whistles and playing trumpets in support of their team.

"I appreciate that the fans

were cheering us, and a lot of them flew here to Tokyo," said Taiwan manager Tseng Hao-jiu.

"The result was something we deserved and I am responsible for the loss."

The Taiwan fans almost

lifted the roof off the stadium when US-born Stuart Fairchild hit a long shot that went just outside the foul pole in Taiwan's first at-bat.

Australia took the wind out of their sails when Perkins

hit the first home run of the tournament, scoring two runs off Taiwan reliever Chen Po-yu in the fifth inning.

There was more bad news for Taiwan when captain Chen Chieh-hsien was forced out of the game in the sixth inning when he was hit on the hand by a pitch.

Australia increased their lead when Bazzana hit a solo home run in the seventh inning.

Taiwan had a chance to take the lead with two runners on base in the ninth inning but Australia relief pitcher Jon Kennedy snuffed out the danger. "Definitely would have preferred a nice, easy inning instead of having to go down to the wire," said Nilsson.

"But he kept his calm, and that's why we kept him in there." □



Australia's Robbie Perkins hits a two-run home run in the fifth inning during the World Baseball Classic (WBC) Pool C first round game between Australia and Taiwan at the Tokyo Dome on March 5, 2026.



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Alcaraz unbeaten run under threat from Sinner, Djokovic at Indian Wells

Indian Wells, United States

Former champion Carlos Alcaraz aims to extend his perfect start to 2026 at Indian Wells while Jannik Sinner returns to the California desert seeking to fill a gap in his resume with his first title of the year.

The world's top two players headline a stellar men's field for the ATP and WTA Masters 1000 tournament, where Serbian superstar Novak Djokovic is chasing a record sixth title, which would see him break out of a tie with Swiss great Roger Federer for the most in tournament history.

Spain's Alcaraz, 22, made history last month when he lifted the Australian Open title to become the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam.

He won the Qatar Open to arrive Stateside riding a 12-match winning streak to



Reilly Opelka of the United States plays a backhand against Ethan Quinn of the United States in their first round match of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells Tennis Garden on March 04, 2026 in Indian Wells, California.

start the year. The top seed could face a tricky second-round opener against either former world number three Grigor Dimitrov or in-form left-

hander Terence Atmane, with third-seeded Djokovic also looming in his half of the draw.

Sinner will play Czech qualifier Dalibor Svrčina, who

beat Australian James Duckworth 6-2, 6-4 as first-round action got underway on Wednesday.

Italy's Matteo Berrettini

booked a second-round meeting with fourth-seeded German Alexander Zverev, beating France's Adrian Mannarino 4-6, 7-5, 7-5.

Sinner missed Indian Wells last year serving a suspension for a positive test for banned anabolic steroid clostebol. He returned from that ban to win Wimbledon and the ATP Finals but fell to Djokovic in the Australian Open semi-finals and lost to Jakob Mensik in the quarters at Doha last month.

Although he professed himself satisfied with his season so far, Sinner said Tuesday he was trying to maximize his potential.

"It has been a very hard practice week here for me," he said. "We spent many, many hours of practice. □"