

Unique fauna of Aruba



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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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How one family's lavender legacy outlasted the odds

EAST MARION, N.Y. — Long before "farm-to-table" was a marketing slogan and decades before social media made flower fields a viral sensation, there was the smell. It is a scent that defies the salty Atlantic breeze: clean, herbal, and impossibly sweet. It is the scent of the Sergejko family's lavender farm, a purple-hued sanctuary on the edge of Long Island that this week celebrates an improbable 100 years of operation.

As the farm prepares for its centennial "Scent of Summer" festival, the rows of *Lavandula angustifolia* stand as more than just a crop. They are a living map of the American Dream, rooted in the soil by a Ukrainian immigrant who arrived in 1922 with little more than a handful of seeds and a refusal to fail.

"My grandfather didn't come here to be a pioneer of 'wellness' or 'agro-tourism,'" says Andre Sergejko, the third-generation owner now overseeing the estate. "He came here because the soil reminded him of home. He planted lavender because it was hardy, it was useful, and it reminded him that beauty can survive



even the harshest winters."

The farm's journey from a humble 10-acre plot to a world-renowned destination was anything but guaranteed. In the 1940s, the land was nearly lost to the war effort; in the 1980s, developers offered millions to turn the purple fields into luxury condos. Each time, the family held firm. Today, the farm remains one of the oldest continuously operating lavender estates in the United States.

What makes the 100-year milestone particularly poi-

gnant is the farm's evolution. In its early days, the lavender was sold primarily for its antiseptic properties and as a moth repellent for linens. Today, it serves a modern world desperate for a moment of quiet. Visitors travel from across the tri-state area and beyond—including a growing number of Caribbean tourists looking for a temperate escape—to walk the "Labyrinth of Lilac," a geometric garden designed for meditation.

"We live in a loud, digital world," Andre says, gesturing to a field where bees hum

in a rhythmic, low-frequency chorus. "People come here to turn off their phones. You can't rush a lavender bloom. It happens when it's ready. There's a lesson in that for all of us."

The centennial celebrations, which kick off this weekend, will feature more than just scenic views. The farm has partnered with local artisans to produce limited-edition oils, honey, and even a lavender-infused lemonade that has become a cult favorite among locals. There are also plans to unveil a commemorative bronze

plaque honoring the original founder, Stefan Sergejko, whose portrait still hangs in the drying barn.

However, the legacy isn't just about looking backward. The family has spent the last decade adapting to a changing climate, implementing innovative water-conservation techniques that have made the farm a model for sustainable agriculture in the Northeast. They are also launching a scholarship program for young immigrant farmers, ensuring the "American Dream" that started here in 1922 continues for the next century.

As the sun sets over the East End, casting a golden light that turns the purple stalks into shimmering velvet, it's easy to see why the Sergejko family stayed. In a world that often feels like it's moving too fast, this 100-year-old farm is a reminder that some things—the best things—take time to grow.

"One hundred years is just the beginning," Andre laughs, tucking a stray sprig of English lavender behind his ear. "The soil is healthy, the bees are happy, and the world still needs a place to breathe." □

The Ghost Light Flickers Back to Life: Harrisburg's Youth Theater Finds Its Voice Again

HARRISBURG, Pa. — For nearly five years, the stage at Central High sat in a state of suspended animation. The velvet curtains, once a vibrant crimson, gathered dust in the wings. The "ghost light"—the single bulb left burning in an empty theater to ward off shadows—was the only performer on the boards. But this weekend, the silence finally broke.

The revival of Harrisburg's Youth Theater program isn't just a school board victory; it is a long-awaited homecoming for a community that felt its heartbeat stutter when the arts were slashed from the budget in 2021. As the house lights dimmed this past Friday for the opening night of *The Sound of Mu-*



Gamut Theatre in downtown Harrisburg

sic, the collective intake of breath from the audience was audible.

"We didn't just lose a class when the program was cut," said Elena Rodriguez,

the newly appointed artistic director who lobbied for two years to restore the department. "We lost a sanctuary. For many of these kids, the theater is

the one place where they aren't judged for being different. It's where they learn that their voice has actual, physical power."

The story of the program's demise is a familiar one in post-pandemic education: rising costs and shifting priorities led to the shuttering of elective "extras." However, the community refused to let the stage go dark permanently. A grassroots coalition of parents, local business owners, and former alumni—some of whom have gone on to Broadway and regional stages—raised over \$150,000 to supplement the district's renewed investment.

The result is a program that feels more professional than

many college departments. The tech booth has been outfitted with modern LED lighting, and the costumes were hand-stitched by a volunteer brigade of local tailors. But the real magic, according to the students, isn't in the equipment.

"I've lived in this town my whole life, and I never thought I'd get to stand on this stage," said Marcus Thorne, a seventeen-year-old senior who plays Captain von Trapp. Marcus had never acted before this year; he was a soft-spoken athlete who wandered into auditions on a whim. "The theater gave me a confidence I didn't know I had. It taught me how to look people in the eye." □

Power of the mind: How positive expectations are shielding the aging brain

BALTIMORE, MD — For decades, the medical community has approached cognitive decline as a purely biological endgame—a mechanical failure of neurons and synapses that comes for us all if we live long enough. However, a landmark study released this Friday by a coalition of U.S. researchers suggests that the most powerful tool for preserving the aging brain might not be a pill or a restrictive diet, but rather the very expectations we hold about our own health.

The study, which followed over 4,000 American adults over the age of 65 for a decade, has revealed a startling correlation: individuals who maintain a high "health optimism" score—believing that they can and will remain healthy as they age—showed a 30% slower rate of cognitive decline compared to their more pessimistic peers.

"What we are seeing is a fundamental shift in how we understand brain aging," says Dr. Alicia Vance, a lead neurologist at the institute that spearheaded the research. "It appears that the brain isn't just a passive organ reacting to time. It is a predictive machine.



An age group athlete competes in the run portion of the 2026 IRONMAN 70.3 Dallas-Little Elm race on March 15, 2026 in Little Elm, Texas.

When we expect health, our bodies seem to find a way to prioritize the biological pathways that maintain it."

Beyond Positive Thinking

The researchers were careful to distinguish "health expectations" from mere "positive thinking." While positive thinking is often a surface-level emotional response, health expectations are deeply held beliefs about one's agency and future.

The data suggests that those with high health expecta-

tions are more likely to engage in "resilience-building" behaviors. They are quicker to seek medical attention for minor issues before they become major, they stay more socially connected, and they are less likely to experience the chronic cortisol spikes associated with the fear of aging.

"In the Caribbean and smaller tight-knit communities, we often see 'super-agers'—people in their 90s who are still active in the church or the market," says Dr. Vance.

"When you interview them, they don't talk about 'inevitable' decline. They talk about what they are going to do next year. That mental framework creates a physiological shield."

The Biology of Belief

The study utilized advanced neuroimaging to track the brain's "white matter" integrity—the wiring that allows different parts of the brain to communicate. Remarkably, the participants with the most positive health

outlooks showed significantly less degradation in these areas.

Biochemically, the researchers believe that a positive outlook lowers systemic inflammation. High levels of stress and a fatalistic view of aging trigger a constant low-level "fight or flight" response. Over years, this inflammation acts like rust on the brain's internal machinery. By maintaining a sense of optimism and control, these seniors are effectively "oiling" their cognitive gears.

The "Self-Fulfilling Prophecy" of Aging

The implications of the study are particularly vital for public health messaging. For years, aging has been marketed in the U.S. and abroad as a series of losses: loss of mobility, loss of memory, and loss of independence.

"We have accidentally created a self-fulfilling prophecy," says social psychologist Marcus Thorne. "If you believe that turning 70 means you will lose your memory, you stop trying to learn new things. You stop challenging your brain. You essentially retire your mind before it's ready to quit. This study proves that the 'use it or lose it' mantra starts with the belief that you can use it." □



ATLANTA, GA — In the high-stakes world of professional basketball, a "clutch" play usually involves a buzzer-beater or a game-saving block. But this Friday, the Atlanta Hawks proved that their most impactful moves happen far away from the hardwood of State Farm Arena.

In a powerful demonstration of corporate social responsibility, the Atlanta Hawks joined forces with FanDuel to announce a \$25,000 "Fast Break" donation aimed at tackling the rising tide of food insecurity in the metro Atlanta area. The initiative, part of a broader "Good News Friday" movement

Full courts and full plates: How the Atlanta Hawks are taking a shot at hunger

sweeping the city, targets families who have found themselves caught between rising grocery costs and stagnant wages.

The funds are being funneled directly into community pillars, including the local YMCA and several high-need student support hubs. Rather than a one-time hand-out, the partnership is designed to strengthen "family stability" by ensuring that students don't have to choose between buying school supplies and eating a nutritious dinner.

"A student cannot focus on a chemistry test or a basketball practice if their stomach is empty," said a spokesperson

for the Hawks' community outreach division. "By partnering with FanDuel, we aren't just writing a check; we are investing in the foundation of this city. We want our youth to know that the home team has their back, both on and off the court." The timing of the donation is critical. As the spring semester enters its final stretch, many school-based pantry programs face dwindling supplies. This \$25,000 injection will allow local organizers to restock shelves with fresh produce, proteins, and shelf-stable essentials for thousands of residents.

For the Caribbean reader, the "Atlanta Model" offers a compelling blueprint for how

professional sports franchises and private tech companies can collaborate to solve local crises. In many island nations, where food costs are often tied to expensive imports, the idea of "sport-for-development"—using the prestige of a national team to drive social change—is a familiar and potent tool.

As the Atlanta Hawks prepare for their next home game, the real "win" of the week is already on the scoreboard. By turning their attention to the dinner tables of their fans, the team has reminded the city that the true measure of a champion isn't found in the standings, but in the strength of the community they serve. □

'We are ready': astronauts arrive at launch site for Moon mission

United States

The four astronauts set to voyage around the Moon arrived at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Friday to make final preparations ahead of their planned journey.

Americans Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch will make the trip with their Canadian colleague Jeremy Hansen, and are now set to take off as soon as April 1.

They started quarantine in Houston last month and will continue that as they await the green light for the Artemis 2 lunar mission that's been plagued by technological difficulties and delays.

"Let's go to the Moon!" exclaimed mission commander Wiseman as the crew arrived.

The journey, set to last around 10 days, will take the astronauts on a loop around the Moon, though they will not land on its surface.

It's the first crewed moonshot in more than a half-century.

The odyssey will mark a series of firsts: the first time a woman, a person of color and a non-American will venture on a Moon mission.

It's also the inaugural crewed flight of NASA's new lunar rocket, dubbed SLS.

The mammoth orange-and-white rocket is de-



Canadian Space Agency astronaut Mission Specialist Jeremy Hansen, NASA astronaut and Artemis II Mission Specialist Christina Koch, NASA astronaut and Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman and NASA astronaut and Artemis II pilot Victor Glover look on during a welcome ceremony ahead of the Artemis II April 1 launch at Kennedy Space Center in Florida on March 27, 2026.

signed to allow the United States to repeatedly return to the Moon in years to come, with the goal of establishing a permanent base that will offer a stepping stone for further exploration.

But getting it off the ground has not been simple. The Artemis 2 mission was originally due to take off as early as February, but repeated setbacks stalled that goal and even necessitated rolling the rocket back to its hangar for analysis and repairs. Wiseman told journalists Friday he was optimistic history was around the corner

NASA has identified potential launch windows every day from April 1-6.

"The rocket is ready. We are ready. NASA is ready. This vehicle is definitely ready to go," Wiseman said.

"But we're also humans trying to load millions of pounds of propellant onto a giant machine and send it to the Moon," he added. "A little piece of my brain is always holding on that April 1 is not a guarantee, April 6 is not a guarantee. We gotta go feel this whole thing out."

Glover said that unpredictability is simply built into an

astronaut's life: "That's this business. It'll go when the engines light at T-minus zero."

"We still have some weather updates and some technical things to get through between now and when the launch window opens," he added.

- 'A relay race' -

This second phase of the Artemis program follows a mission in 2022, when an uncrewed spacecraft flew around the Moon.

NASA intends to now verify that both that spacecraft and the rocket are in work-

ing order before attempting a lunar landing -- a milestone now scheduled for the Artemis 4 mission in 2028.

The space agency's administrator Jared Isaacman also recently outlined revamped plans to build a Moon base.

Astronaut Koch said that while the upcoming journey is historic, the crew has kept perspective on their mission's role as a preliminary step towards something bigger.

"We are already ramping up ideas for how we're going to get the next crew trained," she said. "We're in a relay race, and we're not successful until the next missions are successful."

Glover said that even as the astronauts have faced repeated delays, "I'm also impressed by how much learning we still do."

"And I will tell you, the ultimate learning is going to be the mission."

And that might get personal: the astronauts laughed when asked what idiosyncrasies they feared their crewmates might discover.

"I haven't lived in space for over six months like these three have, and so I won't know how to float and fly," said Hansen. "I'll be a bit clumsy up there so I know that's going to be hilarious and annoying at the same time." □

Renaissance master Raphael honored at New York's Met museum



People attend the press preview of the exhibition "Raphael: Sublime Poetry" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on March 27, 2026.

New York, United States

Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and now Raphael: Starting Friday, New York's prestigious Metropolitan Museum of Art is dedicating a retrospective to the third of the great masters of the Italian Renaissance.

The exhibition traces Raffaello di Giovanni Santi's journey, from his training in his native city of Urbino, in central Italy, to the papal court in Rome before his death in 1520 at age 37.

Highlights include the first painting he completed entirely on his own, as well as tapestries designed for the Sistine Chapel. Carmen Bambach, a specialist in the Italian Renaissance, curated 175 works by Raphael for the first major exhibition devoted to the painter in the United States.

"If we only look at his paintings, we see this supreme, sublime beauty and perfection," she told AFP.

By placing them side by side with his preparatory drawings, visitors can better understand Raphael's creative process.

"They're very intimate. We really seem to be right there looking over his shoulder and seeing him try out things," Bambach said.

She noted that the human figures depicted by Raphael served as "the model for 300 years" for generations of artists.

Italian-American actress Isabella Rossellini lends her voice to an audio guide for the exhibition, which brings together works from museums including France's Louvre. □

Under threat of dying out, Turkish Armenian evolves through art

Istanbul, Turkey

Once spoken by two million people across the Ottoman Empire, Turkish Armenian has shrunk to the point of becoming an endangered language following a century marked by massacres and mass emigration.

Yet defenders of Western Armenian, a language essentially spoken only by Turkey's now-miniscule Armenian minority, are refusing to let their native tongue become a historical curiosity.

"We live within this language; our very existence is intimately bound up with it," said Vahakn Keshishian, whose Yesayan cultural association has organised an Istanbul festival celebrating the language.

Up until the end of March, the Hantibum (Face to Face) festival will feature concerts, workshops and film screenings showcasing Western Armenian.

Classified by UNESCO as an endangered language, it differs in both grammar and pronunciation from the Armenian spoken in modern-day Armenia proper.

"Western Armenian is certainly under threat, but it is far from being a museum piece," said Keshishian. "It remains alive, carried by music, theatre and the publication of newspapers and books."

Yet today, the language



This handout photograph taken on March 4, 2026 and released on March 27, 2026 by the Yesayan Culture and Literature Association shows artists singing at a concert during the Hantibum Festival ("Face to Face," in Armenian) in Istanbul.

is spoken by fewer than 100,000 people of Turkey's 86 million population, as well as the descendants of the worldwide diaspora, following what most scholars agree was the Ottoman Empire's genocide of the Armenians. The Armenians are seeking international recognition for the massacres, which they say killed 1.5 million people between 1915 and 1917.

Turkey strongly denies the accusation of genocide, saying that both Armenians and Turks died as a result of the First World War.

- 'Invisible' -

The task of passing on Armenian culture through the language has been hindered by the decline in people learning and speaking it.

"Western Armenian is spoken less and less at home because it is no longer the language of everyday life. To break this trend, we are organising workshops for young people," explained Betul Bakirci of Aras Publishing, which prints books in both Turkish and Western Armenian.

"Books in Eastern Armenian are far more widely dis-

tributed and available. By contrast, to get hold of a book in Western Armenian, you have to make an effort. Our publishing house fills that role," she added. While Istanbul is still home to some 15 schools teaching Western Armenian to nearly 3,000 students, enrolment has been on the decline for years.

"The political and economic situation in Turkey is pushing young people to imagine their future elsewhere. Many families also prefer to enrol their children in schools that teach West-

ern languages rather than Armenian," said Pakrat Estukyan of Agos, a bilingual Armenian-Turkish weekly newspaper.

Estukyan argued that due to their history, "Armenians prefer to make themselves invisible when the political climate becomes tense."

- 'Democratise access' -

Estukyan saw a glimmer of light in the rising interest from young readers in the Western Armenian-language pages of his newspaper, whose print runs number 5,000 copies.

For Keshishian, the festival organiser, digital tools have also given Turkey's branch of Armenian a new lease of life.

"The possibilities offered by new technologies have been extremely beneficial. Online courses and artificial intelligence have helped democratise access to the language," he explained. In any case, Keshishian argued that Western Armenian speakers had learnt how to reinvent themselves during periods of crisis, and the diaspora had an important role to play in keeping the language alive.

"Wars in the Middle East might have led to the dispersal of Armenians across the region, but they also gave birth to new Armenian-speaking communities across the world." □

Full steam ahead for revived Paris-Berlin night train

Berlin, Germany

The first service on a re-

vived night train between Paris and Berlin arrived in

the German capital on Friday morning, winning plaudits from its passengers.

Among them was 25-year-old French student and train enthusiast Victor Falzon, who had long dreamed of visiting Berlin but was reluctant to fly for environmental reasons.

"When we saw that a new line was opening, we said to ourselves: 'This is the moment!'" he told AFP after stepping off the train at Berlin's Central Station.

The new service has been launched without public subsidy by the Dutch-

Belgian European Sleeper company, founded in 2021.

It replaces the Paris-Berlin night train which started with great fanfare in late 2023, in a joint venture by the French company SNCF, Germany's Deutsche Bahn, and Austria's OeBB.

That service was suspended in December 2024 after the French government ceased a 10 million euro (\$11.5 million) subsidy for the line, rendering it unviable.

The collapse of the previous night train route between the two capitals

prompted "pyjama protests" at several European stations.

Little wonder then that train buffs have welcomed the new service so warmly. Falzon remembered with a smile that "every time we pulled into a station, people were waiting for us with flags".

What with the scenery rolling past and the excitement of the trip, he and his friends "had trouble falling asleep".

Falzon admitted that the cabin was "a little cramped" with five passengers. □

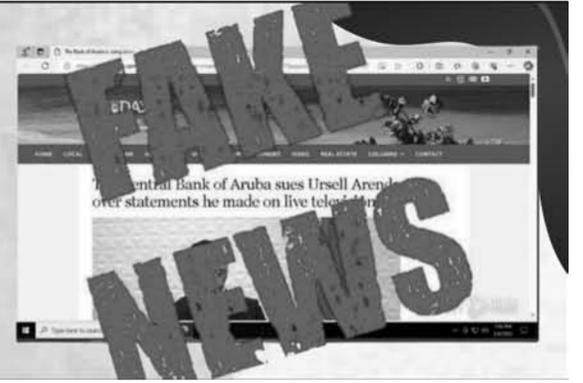


Co-founder of "European Sleeper" Elmer van Buuren, Managing Director of "visit Berlin" Sabine Wendt and Co-founder of "European Sleeper" Chris Engelsman pose with a sign after the arrival of the European Sleeper night train from Paris in Berlin, on March 27, 2026.

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Mohair goats roam in the patch of pasture land outside the Wheatlands farm in Graaf-Reinet, on March 4, 2026.

Global mohair supply flourishes in South Africa's desert

Graaff-Reinet, South Africa

On a farm in South Africa's semi-arid south, herds of angora goats foraged across open land stretching to the horizon, their pale fleeces glinting in the harsh sun.

Linked by dirt tracks and dotted with remote farms, the sparsely populated Karoo region sits at the heart of the global mohair trade, supplying more than half of the world's output of the fibre prized for its sheen and softness.

A Cape Dutch-style gable in one corner of the farm bears the inscription "Wheatlands 1912."

"This is the newest house on the property," said Lloyd Short, who grew up on the 7,700-hectare (19,000-acre) family farm.

But Wheatlands owes its reputation not to architecture or rural charm, but to its goats with drooping ears, curved horns and lustrous golden fleeces.

Their silky curls can fetch

up to 900 rands (\$53) per kilogramme and are used in knitwear, often blended with wool.

The Italian mill Vitale Barberis Canonico, renowned for luxury suit fabrics, is among those sourcing South African mohair for their yarn.

"The first two shearing are the most valuable," said Short, a seventh-generation farmer, who collects an average of between one and 1.5 kilogrammes per animal. Output rises slightly with age, but the fibre loses value over time.

Short and his brother each have around 2,000 goats and supply a major French fashion house exclusively, allowing it to trace its sourcing and protect its brand.

The industry's reputation was tested in 2018, when animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) released footage of a goat killed after an artery was accidentally cut during

shearing an incident farmers say is rare.

Brands, including Swedish H&M, American Gap, Zara and Topshop, swiftly dropped mohair.

Confidence only began to recover after the introduction of an independently audited animal welfare certification.

"Farmers go through annual audits, so they get visited once a year by their brokers and then they also get third-party audited," said Marco Coetzee, director of the sector's representative organisation, Mohair South Africa.

- 'Specialised fibre' -

South Africa accounted for 56 percent of global production in 2024, according to industry figures.

The sector supports around 30,000 jobs, including hundreds in the Karoo, an unlikely new home for a breed originally from Turkey.

How the goats arrived in the 19th century remains unclear. □



Tonah plays on a tablet at his home in Lewes in southern England on March, 27, 2026.

U.K. parents told to limit under-5s screen time

London, United Kingdom

The U.K. government on Friday published its first national guidance on screen time for children, advising parents to allow no more than an hour a day for under-fives.

The guidance comes amid a wider global debate on how to keep children safe online and in particular on the potential perils of phones and social media.

The UK recommendations include no screen time at all for children under the age of two and the avoidance of "fast-paced social media-style videos and AI toys or tools".

Prime Minister Keir Starmer was discussing the suggestions during a visit Friday to a school in south London. He said in a statement his government was committed to helping parents get the balance right in a world in which screens were "everywhere and the advice is often conflicting".

The government would "not leave parents to face this battle alone", he vowed.

Other advice to parents included avoiding screen time during meals and in the hour before bed.

Solo viewing should also be limited in favour of watching screens together, in an environment that encouraged discussion and questions, it added.

The pointers follows a consultation with more than 1,000 parents on how to build healthy viewing habits.

There has been concern after a report by the early years charity Kindred Squared found that 28 percent of children starting school aged five could not use a book properly, with many attempting to "swipe" pages like a tablet or phone.

Children's Commissioner Rachel de Souza, co-chair of the group that advised the government, said she hoped the guidance would provide "clear, non-judgemental information about why limiting screen use is important". The debate has been galvanised in recent months after Australia in December issued a blanket ban on social media for children under 16. □

Unique fauna of Aruba

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

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

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

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

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

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cucularia arubensis*)

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

good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

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

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

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

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

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

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



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

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

Coneu (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

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

The Aruban Coneu has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the

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

The Aruban Coneu is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Coneu is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Coneu can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. □



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A guide for the perfect picture: Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Aruba

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're out and about on the island and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Aruba is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Aruba.

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in Mainstreet Oranjestad, check out the wooden swing on Plaza Daniel Leo. This is another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Mangel Halto

For a different take on beach photos, we definitely recommend Mangel Halto! You can get in the water right

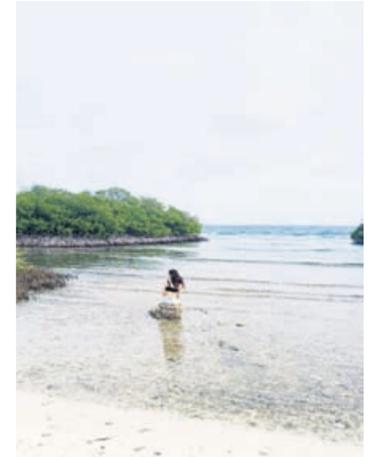
by the roots of these beautiful trees (please be careful not to climb them, though!). You will see beautiful skies, birds and other wildlife, and among the greenery of the mangroves, your picture is sure to pop!

Yacht Dock in Oranjestad

Last but certainly not least, the Yacht Dock in Oranjestad is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas!

"I LOVE ARUBA"

While you're in the area, check out the 'I LOVE ARUBA' sign is a great first stop for a quick shot with the family. This spot is among the few that has become a favorite



among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too

many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!☑



(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Nat-

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

ural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

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

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

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking

along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge"☑



Amsterdam Manor Celebrates Aruba's Flag & Anthem Day with Culture, Community, and Culinary Experiences

In honor of Aruba's Flag & Anthem Day, Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort hosted a series of vibrant experiences celebrating the island's rich culture, traditions, and community spirit.

As a pre-celebration on March 17, the resort organized a lively local market in the Horizons Lounge area from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. The event served as a platform for local startups and entrepreneurs to showcase their products, offering guests an authentic taste of Aruba's creativity and craftsmanship. Visitors were welcomed with a refreshing coconut drink and invited to explore a diverse selection of locally made goods, including handmade accessories, artisanal products, and themed sweets inspired by the "Himno y Bandera" celebration. Popular highlights included Love Aruba Heat hot sauces and a variety of traditional treats.

The festive atmosphere was enhanced by live entertainment, including a steelpan player and traditional "cah'i orgel" music box. Unique to the ABC islands, the cah'i orgel is a cherished instrument in Aruban folklore. Its presence added an authentic cultural touch, bringing together generations through music and tradition. The event concluded with a beautiful and memorable dance performance.

Continuing the celebration on March 18, the resort's beachfront restaurant, Passions on the Beach, invited guests to indulge in a special cu-

linary experience on the shores of Eagle Beach. In honor of Flag & Anthem Day, the restaurant featured a "Flavors of Flag Day" Aruba Mix Platter, available during both lunch and dinner.

This thoughtfully curated dish highlighted beloved elements of traditional Aruban cuisine, including red snapper, garlic shrimp, keshi yena, and sanger yena. The platter was complemented by classic island sides such as plantain, creole potatoes, polenta, and pickled onions, offering a vibrant and authentic taste of Aruba. Priced at \$35, the special provided both locals and visitors with a unique opportunity to celebrate the island's culinary heritage in a stunning beachfront setting.

As part of the celebration, local residents were also invited to enjoy a 15% discount during dinner service on March 18 as a token of appreciation for the community.

These events reflect Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort's ongoing commitment to giving back to the community while creating meaningful experiences that celebrate and showcase Aruba's rich culture to its guests. The team extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who participated and looks forward to continuing these cherished traditions for years to come.



Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

The 'Lisinbein' (*Scolopendra gigantea*), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In *Scolopendra* species, the 'mother' typically

exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony.

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation. □



Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names; Ayo & Alto Vista



(Oranjestad)—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.

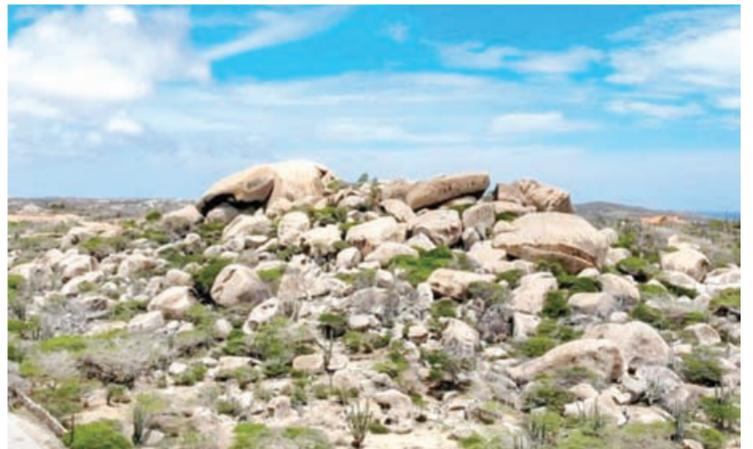
Ayo
Ajo, or Ayo, is a word with Arawak-Indian origin. A (or Ha) is an Indo-Antillean generalizing word. If you were to change a part of the word "Ayo", namely 'Yo', to 'Yu' and make 'Ayu', it would mean "white."

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. ☐

The Bali Restaurant: a touristic hot spot and lost gem on the island

(Oranjestad)—Once located by the yacht dock in front of the Parliament building, the Bali Restaurant was once both a touristic and local hot spot, and nowadays it's considered a forgotten gem on the island.

Known as "the floating restaurant", Bali first opened

in 1955 by Willem "Bill" Strijland, who had experience in Javanese cuisine. At the time, the restaurant was pretty exclusivewith space to host only 25 guests. Yet, 4 years later, it was named the best restaurant in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Tourist Association.

The restaurant was proba-

bly most iconic for its Javanese-inspired exterior with its pointy, slanted roofs. However, the first version of Bali did not look like that at all but was still considered as one of the most popular restaurants on the island at the time. The restaurant saw three different owners during its existence, during which it underwent various renovations and rebranding.

In 1964, the restaurant was taken over by Karel "Carl" Schmand. Over the years, the restaurant needed constant renovation and repair, mainly due to its vulnerability to leaks and the unstable pillars underneath the foundation. However, the biggest change made to the res-

taurant happened in the year 1970 still under the ownership of Schmand, when it got its iconic pointy roofs. The restaurant was also expanded to host a total of 85 guests. This was "The New Bali", who had its official (re)opening in 1972.

After 1972, when Ronny Schmand took over, the restaurant saw yet another expansion; this time complete with a long bar and dance floor, where guests enjoyed live music from legendary Aruban musician and composer, Toti Arends.

After 1989, the restaurant was again handed over to other owners, and since then suffered from unstable pillars underneath the foundation, resulting in

various leaks and overflowing of water into the restaurant. And as most great things come to an end, so did the survival and maintenance of the Bali Restaurant. However, folks today reminisce its legacy, and it's now considered a lost monument.

Be a part of the conversation: if you or any family member of yours have a memory of the Bali restaurant, whether it be a picture or just a story, share it with us! We would love to see this legendary hot spot through the lens of our visitors!

Source and pictures credit to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.☐



The Aruban Cunukero: From past to present

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.



Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

- The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
- Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
- Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;
- Lastly you have the "Runaway Peasant-ries", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were

officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its duper dry climate, many farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of

land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events.

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red. □

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CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS 46 Checked out

1 Denali setting

7 Invites

11 Door

12 Debt reminder

13 Idaho export

14 Wee

15 Stops, as rain

17 Bad writer

20 Stratum

23 "That's disgusting!"

24 Like many roads

26 Avril follower

27 Drake's music

28 Gene messenger

29 Collapse inward

31 Failure

32 Car sticker

33 Tag sale words

34 Finally

37 Tabloid staple

39 Voter's page

43 Assistant

44 Pal of George and Jerry

45 Fall short of

DOWN

1 Phone

download

2 John, to

Ringo

3 Gallery fill

4 Celery

5 Designer

Spade

6 Oodles

7 Real

8 Boat-

building

places

9 Family

10 Pig's

place

16 Incline

17 Like a

green-

house

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32								33		
			34			35	36			
37	38					39		40	41	42
43						44				
45						46				

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.

4-12 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

VQJA NLATA IMC M NLSQH
JMFFAZ CETSQH ILAQ NLA IVTFZ
IMC ITSNSQH BATCAC FSRA
KVXTC MQZ PSQA. — AFFM
WSNOHATMFZ

Cryptoquote: YOU MISS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE SHOTS YOU DON'T TAKE. — WAYNE GRETZKY

Cruise ship Schedule: March 23 - 31 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	23	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	C	1
TUE	24	NORWEGIAN SKY OASIS OF THE SEAS	13.30 08.00	22.30 23.00	C I	1 1
WED	25	SERENADE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 13.00	23.00 23.00	B C	1 1
FRI	27	REGAL PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
MON	30	EXPLORA II	09.00	18.00	C	1
TUE	31	CARNIVAL HORIZON AIDABLU NORWEGIAN SKY FREEWINDS	08.00 11.30 13.30 09.30	22.00 22.00 22.30 ****	B C I E	1 1 1 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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

3/28

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

3/27

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Austria to ban social media for children under 14

Vienna, Austria

Austria on Thursday announced it will soon ban social media for children up to the age of 14, saying it spawned addiction, glorified violence, spread misinformation and set unrealistic beauty standards. "It is almost impossible for parents to control their children's consumption" on these platforms, which are designed to make them "deliberately dependent," Vice-Chancellor Andreas Babler told a press conference.

The country of 9.2 million hopes to be able to present the new law "as early as this summer" so it can enter into force "as quickly as possible," he said.

Babler said Austria will target platforms using "algorithms that create addiction, generate profits and have harmful effects".

Babler said children were "left to their own devices in a world where they are confronted, for example, with unrealistic beauty ideals, the glorification of violence, disinformation, and where they are also manipulated."

But he said there was still no consensus among the three parties in the ruling coalition regarding the verification method that will be put in place.

A three-week "no mobile phone" experiment, led by the education ministry and involving 72,000 pupils and their families, has just ended in Austria.

"The feedback we have is that this has been a kind of withdrawal experience for the pupils and that they are aware of the harmful effects of their excessive consumption," Education Minister Christoph Wiederkehr told the news conference.

In addition to the ban itself, the Austrian government plans to introduce a new compulsory subject in schools called "Media and Democracy," intended to help pupils distinguish truth from falsehood and recognise anti-democratic attempts at influence.



The Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPOe) Andreas Babler speaks during a press conference with the leaders of the Austrian People's Party (OeVP) and of the liberal NEOS as they present their parties' coalition program at the parliament in Vienna, Austria, on February 27, 2025.

The far-right FPÖ party, which came first in the 2024 legislative elections without managing to form a government, denounced the move as a "frontal assault on freedom of expression".

"Now that critical voices, alternative media and patriotic forces are gaining reach on social networks, they suddenly want to impose bans and censorship measures," FPÖ MP Katarun Pracher-Hilander said. Several European Union countries have announced their intention to introduce

a digital age of majority for social networks, such as France, Spain and Denmark, while others are actively considering it.

In the United States, Meta and Google were found liable on Wednesday for contributing to a teenage girl's depression via Instagram and YouTube by a Los Angeles civil court, which also ruled that the two California giants were responsible for not sufficiently warning young users about the risks of overconsumption, even though they were aware of this danger.

On Tuesday, a jury in San-

ta Fe in the United States found Meta liable for endangering underage users of Facebook and Instagram. □



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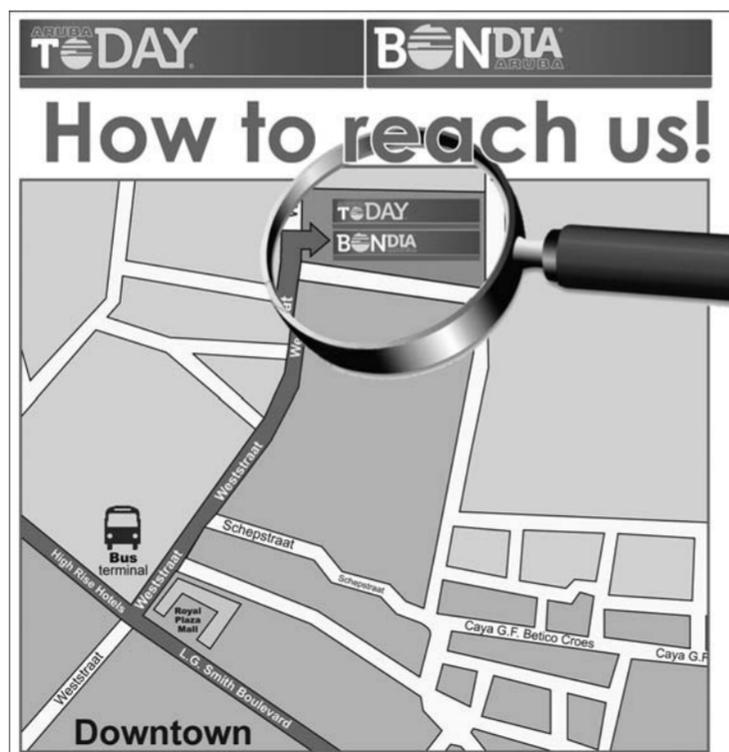
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OTHER

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EMERGENCY

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Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Whale filmed giving birth, with a little help from her friends

Paris, France

Scientists have managed to film a spectacular event rarely witnessed by humans: a sperm whale giving birth while other females worked together to support the mother and her newborn.

A team from Project CETI, an international effort seeking to understand how whales communicate, were in a boat near a pod of 11 whales off the coast of the Caribbean island of Dominica on July 8, 2023.

A 19-year-old female named Rounder was surrounded by family members and others as she was about to give birth to her second calf.



A handout picture taken on July 8, 2023 off Dominique island and released by Project CETI shows a female sperm whale holding a newborn sperm whale calf above water until it is able to swim on its own.

Over nearly five and a half hours, the scientists documented the group's behaviour, watching them from the boat, filming them with drones and recording the sounds underneath the waves.

The data they collected, which was published in the journals *Scientific Reports* and *Science* on Thursday, represent an exceptional rarity in the history of science.

Out of 93 species of cetaceans a group that includes whales, dolphins and porpoises only nine

have ever been observed giving birth in the wild.

Rarer still was that whales not related to the mother were helping out.

"This is the first evidence of birth assistance in non-primates," Project CETI team member Shane Gero told the *New Scientist*.

"It is fascinating to see the intergenerational support from the grandmother to her labouring daughter, and the support from the other, unrelated females."

- Lifting up the newborn -

The birth lasted 34 minutes, from their tails emerging

from the water to the calf being born.

During labour, other adult females dove under Rounder's dorsal fin, often on their backs with the heads facing her genital slit.

Immediately after the birth, the pod's behaviour "rapidly changed" as every member became active, according to the study in *Scientific Reports*.

All the adults were "squeezing the newborn's body between theirs, touching it with their heads", the researchers wrote.

The whales pointed their noses towards the new-

born, "pushing it around, under the water, and onto and across their bodies above the surface".

The remarkable behaviour dates back more than 36 million years and is believed to be due to the unique history of cetaceans.

After their distant ancestors left the water and adapted to life on land, cetaceans are the only mammals that returned to the ocean.

This dive back into the water required some evolutionary tricks to prevent newborns from drowning.

For example, whale calves are born tail-first, rather

than head-first like other mammals.

However, while newborn sperm whales become talented swimmers within a few hours, they still sink right after birth.

So other whales have to lift the calf up "to prevent the newborn from sinking while also facilitating its first breaths", the researchers suggested.

Primates including humans are the only other mammals known to help assist each other out during birth.

- Excited vocal sounds -

The scientists also recorded the whales making many sounds, including significant changes in "vocal style" during key events, the study said.

This included when a group of pilot whales approached the pod after the birth.

The changes in vocalisation suggest that the group was coordinating to support the birth or protect the newborn, the researchers said.

Sperm whales have one of the longest pregnancies in the animal kingdom, with a gestation period that lasts up to 16 months.

When calves are born they are already four metres (13 feet) long. They will rely on their mother's milk for at least two years. □

Arctic sea ice at lowest level ever this winter

Washington, United States

Arctic sea ice reached its lowest level ever recorded, statistically tying last year's record, a leading US climate observatory for this geopolitically significant region said on Thursday.

The ice is formed by seawater that freezes through the winter. It partially melts through the summer. However, the amount of reformation each winter is in decline, as rising temperatures due to climate

change disproportionately affect the Arctic.

- Earlier and lower levels -

This year's maximum ice level was reached on March 15 a week earlier than last year.

The ice clocked in just below last year's level at 14.29 million square kilometers, a statistical tie with last year's all-time record low of 14.31 million square kilometers, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) in Boulder, Colorado.

It is the lowest level observed in 48 years of satellite monitoring. Previous records were set in 2016, 2017, and 2018.

This year's weak ice formation "gives a head start

to the spring and summer melt season," said NSIDC Senior Researcher Walt Meier. Samantha Burgess of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) had a similar analysis in a recent conversation with AFP, saying it may trigger a "potentially faster and more extensive summer melt."

The weak ice growth was visible on satellite for weeks, as AFP reported earlier in March.

- Impacts on wildlife, geopolitics -

Unlike land-based ice such as glaciers or ice sheets melting sea ice does not directly raise sea levels. But it does cause wide-ranging climate impacts that

threaten ecosystems.

Many species, including polar bears in the Arctic and emperor penguins in Antarctica, rely on sea ice to breed and feed.

Some effects can cascade.

"There are areas, for example, in the Beaufort Sea, near Canada or the Siberian seas of the ocean, that had never been exposed to the atmosphere," says Gilles Garric, a polar oceanographer at Mercator Ocean Toulouse. That exposure, in turn, could make these waters warmer in the summer.

The melt also has geopolitical consequences, as it opens new shipping routes and access to mineral resources. □



Ice is pictured from icebreaker Urho on January 28, 2026 in Helsinki, Finland.

Sabalenka, Sinner keep 'Sunshine Double' in sight with Miami Open wins

Miami, United States

World number one and defending champion Aryna Sabalenka subdued second-ranked rival Elena Rybakina 6-4, 6-3 on Thursday to book a Miami Open title clash with American Coco Gauff.

Sabalenka, who fell to Rybakina in the Australian Open final before turning the tables on the Kazakh in the Indian Wells title match this earlier this month, broke the big-serving Rybakina twice in each set to come out on top in the blockbuster semi-final and keep her bid for the "Sunshine Double" of Indian Wells and Miami on track.

Men's world number two Jannik Sinner, who like Sabalenka lifted his first Indian Wells title two weeks ago, also advanced, dominating American Frances Tiafoe 6-2, 6-2 to reach the men's semi-finals.

Their victories mean both the ATP and WTA could see a "Sunshine Double" in the same year for the first time since Novak Djokovic and Victoria Azarenka swept the two prestigious hard-court tournaments back in



Aryna Sabalenka returns a shot to Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan during the Women's Singles Semifinals on Day 10 of the Miami Open Presented by Itau at Hard Rock Stadium on March 26, 2026 in Miami Gardens, Florida.

2016.

Sabalenka, who had to save a match point in overcoming Rybakina in the Indian Wells final, applied ruthless pressure on Rybakina's serve while delivering a sterling service performance that featured nine aces including four in a row across the seventh and ninth games of the opening set.

"I think I did everything right," the Belarusian said. Sabalenka seized the first break for a 3-1 lead in the opening. Rybakina broke back, but Sabalenka broke again to pocket the set and took control in the second with a break for 2-0 in a game which Rybakina led 40-0.

Trailing 0-4, Rybakina

clawed back a break for 4-1 but Sabalenka wouldn't flinch again. Rybakina saved one match point on her own serve before Sabalenka served it out with a love game punctuated by a fierce forehand winner. It was just one of the commanding victories at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins, on Thursday.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner needed just 71 minutes to dispatch Tiafoe and set up a semi-final meeting with fourth-ranked German Alexander Zverev who swept past 19th-ranked Argentinian Francisco Cerundolo 6-1, 6-2 in just 65 minutes.

Fourth-ranked Gauff, who had needed three sets in each of her prior four matches, overwhelmed Czech Karolina Muchova 6-1, 6-1 to secure her place in Saturday's women's final.

- 'Good serving day' -

Gauff surrendered a break on a double fault in the opening game against Muchova then won the next 10 games.

She broke Muchova again to finish the match after 89 minutes, booking her final berth less than three weeks after she retired from her third-round match at Indian Wells with a nerve issue affecting her left arm.

"I think I feel the improvements are happening especially with my forehand I was happy with how it's been this whole tournament," Gauff said. □

Vingegaard takes Tour of Catalonia lead with stage five win

La Molina, Spain

Jonas Vingegaard powered to a solo victory on stage five of the Tour of Catalonia on Friday to move into the overall lead. The two-time Tour de France winner and race favourite attacked and quickly dropped double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel before catching the break and charging into the lead on the final climb in the Pyrenees mountains.

Austrian Felix Gall came in second, 51 seconds behind the Dane, with France's Lenny Martinez pipping German Florian Lipowitz to complete the podium 10 seconds later.

Visma-lease a Bike rider Vingegaard leads overall by 57 seconds from Gall

and is 1min 09sec ahead of third-place Martinez.

Having already won the prestigious Paris-Nice stage race earlier this month claiming two stages along the way Vingegaard is well-placed to continue his successful start to the season as he builds up to a tilt at the Giro d'Italia-Tour de France double.

"Actually it was quite a hard stage... I didn't feel the very, very best in the beginning," said Vingegaard, who praised his teammates including Sepp Kuss for helping with his triumph.

"It was good teamwork today," he continued. "I felt really strong on the last climb and in the end I'm really happy with the gap

I made today."

Riders were set to travel 155 kilometres from La Seu d'Urgell to La Molina, facing five categorised climbs in the race's Queen Stage. However, the route was shortened again because of high winds, as it was on Thursday, albeit less dramatically, with the tough final climb of Coll de Pal clipped by 2.2 kilometres.

- 'Horror crash' -

Several riders crashed on the descent of Collada Sobirana with 25 kilometres to go, including Joao Almeida and Tom Pidcock, although they were able to continue.

Giulio Ciccone went solo at the front with around 17 kilometres remaining, leaving the other breakaway riders Marc Soler and Da-

vide Piganzoli behind to be swallowed up by the peloton.

Ciccone was just over a minute ahead with 10 kilometres to go, followed by a small chase group.

Favourite Vingegaard attacked with around 7km to go to try and bridge the gap to the chasers, along with Evenepoel, but the Dane was able to drop the Belgian. □



Team Visma-lease a bike's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard celebrates winning the fifth stage of the 2026 Volta a Catalunya cycling tour of Catalonia, a 155.5 km race between La Seu d'Urgell and La Molina ski resort in Alp, on March 27, 2026.

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Dodgers launch three-peat bid with win on historic day of MLB openers

New York, United States

The Los Angeles Dodgers, sparked by Andy Pages's three-run homer, launched their bid for a World Series three-peat with an 8-2 victory over Arizona on Thursday on a historic day of Major League Baseball season openers.

Dodgers pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto, the reigning World Series Most Valuable Player, pitched six strong innings, both runs he allowed coming on Geraldo Perdomo's two-run homer in the fourth that staked the Diamondbacks to a 2-0 lead.

Diamondback starting pitcher Zac Gallen gave up a leadoff single to Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani but retired 12 of the next 13 batters he faced before



Andy Pages #44 of the Los Angeles Dodgers hits a three-run home run during the fifth inning against the Arizona Diamondbacks during Opening Day at Dodger Stadium on March 26, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

the Dodgers offense heat- ed up in the fifth inning.

Max Muncy and Teoscar

Hernandez led off the fifth with base hits and Pages followed with the first home run of the Dodgers' three-peat bid into the left field seats.

They chased Gallen later in the inning, adding another run on a single by Will Smith who added a two-run homer in a four-run seventh inning.

The evening at Dodger Stadium started with the Dodgers celebrating their 2025 title before opening their bid for a rare third straight title run.

"There's obviously going to be a lot of talk about it, but I think our guys are trying to just think about winning a game today," manager Dave Roberts said. □

Hornets sting Knicks to maintain playoff push

Los Angeles, United States

Kon Knueppel scored 26 points as the Charlotte Hornets maintained their late-season charge for an NBA playoff berth with an emphatic 114-103 defeat of the high-flying New York Knicks on Thursday.

Charlotte forward Knueppel rattled in six three-pointers as part of an impressive all-round team shooting display to help the Hornets extend their winning streak to five games as they chase a postseason ticket.

LaMelo Ball finished with 22 points, six assists and five rebounds, one of five

Charlotte players to finish in double digits. The Hornets have now won 23 of their last 29 games

since late January, and are firmly in the thick of the Eastern Conference race for the playoffs.



LaMelo Ball #1 of the Charlotte Hornets dives for the ball in the second half against the New York Knicks during their game at Spectrum Center on March 26, 2026 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

With sixth-placed Toronto occupying the last automatic playoff spot at 40-32, Charlotte are part of a cluster of teams jostling for position just below them. Philadelphia occupy seventh place on 40-33 while Charlotte, Orlando and Miami all have identical 39-34 records.

Charlotte's blistering form is part of a remarkable turnaround this season for the franchise, who finished just one place off the bottom of the Eastern Conference last season with just 19 wins.

Orlando kept pace with

Charlotte on Thursday with a 121-117 defeat of the Sacramento Kings, thanks to 30 points from Paolo Banchero and 23 from Desmond Bane.

In Thursday's other game, the Eastern Conference-leading Detroit Pistons bounced back from Wednesday's overtime defeat to Atlanta with a comfortable 129-108 defeat of the New Orleans Pelicans.

With Cade Cunningham still absent as he recovers from a collapsed lung, Jalen Duren took on the offensive duties with 30 points and 10 rebounds. □