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# 'Fired and festive': 'Late Show' host Stephen Colbert bows out

**New York, United States**  
 "The Late Show" frontman Stephen Colbert will host the final edition of the 33-year-old U.S. cultural institution on Thursday night, after it was cancelled by CBS as the network courts President Donald Trump. The show, which Colbert has hosted since 2015, was axed after he mocked the broadcaster for a \$16 million settlement with Trump for allegedly "maliciously" editing an interview with his Democratic election rival Kamala Harris.

Colbert called it a "big fat bribe." CBS has insisted the decision to cancel "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," the ratings leader in the time slot, was purely financial and that it was a coincidence the move came as CBS parent company Paramount lobbied for government approval of its \$8.4 billion merger with Skydance Media.

Around that time CBS brought in Bari Weiss, a right-wing journalist without significant TV experience, to run its news division. In the weeks leading to Thursday's curtain call, 62-year-old Colbert has at times cut a subdued figure,



**U.S. comedian Stephen Colbert speaks onstage during the 77th Primetime Emmy Awards at the Peacock Theatre at LA Live in Los Angeles on September 14, 2025.**

lacking some of his usual cheerful flair. "I can finally speak unvarnished truth to power and say what I really think about Donald Trump starting right now," he told People. "I don't have any fear of the administration doing anything to me. I mean, how silly would it be?"

The identity of the final night's guests remained a closely held secret early Thursday. Defying the rain to line up outside the show's Broad-

way home, ticketholder Koenraad Smits, 31, said "it's just a better way to consume the news nowadays."

"It's usually a little bit more uplifting than the regular news -- with a dash of truthiness, and just like a dash of comedy in there, just to make it all just more digestible," said the chef who wore a "Late Show" T-shirt. Colbert coined the word "truthiness" belief based on gut feeling in 2005, going on to be declared word

of the year. On the penultimate night, rock legend Bruce Springsteen joined the "Late Show" to sing his "Streets of Minneapolis" anti-Trump protest song and to attack the Republican leader. "You're the first guy in America who's lost his show because we've got a president who can't take a joke," Springsteen told Colbert. And Colbert was clearly moved when he was joined in his studio by fellow late night hosts Jimmy Fallon,

Jimmy Kimmel, Seth Meyers and John Oliver, who paid tribute in the final days. Kimmel was briefly taken off the air in September 2025 by his network ABC after complaints about a remark he made over the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

**- Targeted by Trump -**  
 Trump has repeatedly attacked media and press freedom since returning to office, using lawsuits and regulatory threats to retaliate for unflattering news coverage and jokes. The president has long been a fierce critic of late-night talk show hosts and their jabs at him. Trump has called Colbert a "pathetic trainwreck" who should be "put to sleep." One late night host bidding a less fond farewell was Greg Gutfeld of right-wing Fox News.

Asked in November about both the cancellation and Kimmel's suspension, Gutfeld said, "Why did it take so long?" Colbert made his name playing a fictitious version of himself, embodying the type of conservative blowhard beloved by Fox News viewers and derided by the left. □

## Beloved Citroen 2CV revived as electric car

**Auburn Hills, United States**  
 The 2CV, the iconic French car popular for much of the last century, is to be reincarnated as an electric vehicle 36 years after production ceased, Citroen announced Thursday. "The 2CV is back!" said CEO Xavier Chardon said. "Citroen is back. Back to the future." The announcement came at an investor day in Michigan by parent company Stellantis, which also owns Jeep, Ram and Fiat, among other brands. A version of the vehicle is expected at the Paris auto show in October. At Thursday's event, journalists and analysts could see an exterior of the revamped 2CV that retains the original contours, with

signature features such as a domed and ribbed front hood and protruding headlights. However, modern road standards may necessitate adjustments once the ve-



**Citroen 2CV vehicles are parked at a camp during the 25th World Meeting of 2CV Friends in Postojna, Slovenia on July 30, 2025.**

hicle enters production. "It's a very important moment, because in 1948 the 2CV gave freedom of mobility to millions, and 80 years later, the new 2CV will democratize electric

mobility," Chardon said. Chardon vowed that the reboot will be "100 percent electric," entirely produced in Europe and priced at below 15,000 euros (\$17,400).

"The true people's car designed for real life," he said. "For me, the future of mobility will not be won by the most complex cars, but by the simplest and the most intuitive ones." Citroen officials plan to mainly market the vehicle in Europe, anticipating it will hit retail showrooms in about two years.

Stellantis announced this week a campaign around "e-cars," small electric vehicles costing at most 15,000 euros under differ-

ent brands to be produced in Pomigliano d'Arco, Italy. The Citroen 2CV, or "two horses" was first unveiled with fanfare on October 7, 1948 at the Paris auto salon. Originally fabricated in a single color -- gray -- the vehicle, nicknamed "la deudeuche," found quick success with consumers, leading to delivery delays in the 1950s. While keeping the same basic silhouette, subsequent models had greater power and came in a variety of colors. There were also limited editions such as the Charleston, the Dolly and a "007" version to coincide with the 1981 James Bond Movie "For Your Eyes Only" that featured a yellow 2CV. □

## How a 73-Year-Old “NICU Grandpa” whispers hope to Richmond’s tiniest fighters

In the quiet, sterile corridors of the Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU, the rhythmic beep of heart monitors and the soft hum of ventilators form the soundtrack of survival. This is the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), a place where the world’s smallest warriors fight for their first breaths. Amidst the high-tech machinery and the hurried footsteps of specialized medical staff, there is a man whose primary equipment is a rocking chair and a pair of steady, gentle hands.

At 73 years old, Dave Whitlow has discovered a retirement calling that is as profound as it is simple. Known affectionately as a “volunteer cuddler,” Whitlow has dedicated the last eight years of his life to providing the one thing medicine cannot manufacture: the restorative power of human touch.

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, Whitlow arrives at the hospital, leaves his smartphone in his locker, and undergoes a rigorous scrubbing and gowning process. For the next



several hours, he is not a retired local government manager or a grandfather; he is a lifeline for infants who are often too fragile to go home but too lonely to thrive in silence.

The science behind Whitlow’s work is compelling. Medical professionals have long recognized that for premature infants or those born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS),

“skin-to-skin” contact and consistent rocking are not just comforts they are clinical necessities. Physical touch helps regulate an infant’s heart rate, stabilizes their body temperature, and lowers cortisol levels. In many cases, babies who are held regularly by volunteer cuddlers see shorter hospital stays and improved neurodevelopment outcomes.

“These little ones are un-

der so much stress,” Whitlow explains with a soft smile. “They are poked and propped and monitored all day long. Sometimes, they just need to know that there is a person there who isn’t going to stick them with a needle, someone who is just there to hold them and tell them they are loved.” The need for volunteers like Whitlow arises from a heartbreaking reality of modern healthcare. While nurses

are highly skilled, they are often stretched thin by medical emergencies and administrative duties. Furthermore, many parents of NICU babies face agonizing hurdles. Some must return to work immediately to keep their health insurance; others live hours away or are caring for other children at home. When a parent cannot be at the bedside, the “NICU Grandpa” steps in.

Whitlow’s approach is one of total presence. While he rocks a baby, his eyes never leave the monitors. He has become so attuned to the infants that he can often sense a dip in oxygen levels or a spike in heart rate before the alarms even sound, allowing him to alert the nursing staff instantly. He is an extra set of eyes and a steady heartbeat in a room that can often feel overwhelmed by technology.

However, it is the emotional connection that leaves the deepest mark. Whitlow has a signature ritual for every child he holds. □

## Super-Bees’ in southern California evolve to defeat deadly parasites



In the sprawling canyons and sun-soaked coastal sage scrub of Southern California, a silent revolution is buzzing through the air. While honeybee populations worldwide have faced a harrowing decline due to the “Varroa destructor” mite, a localized strain of resilient bees has been discovered thriving in San Diego and Riverside counties. These “super-bees”

have achieved what scientists have spent decades trying to engineer in a lab: a natural, genetic defense against one of nature’s most lethal parasites.

The Varroa mite is a beekeeper’s worst nightmare. These microscopic red hitchhikers attach to bees, draining their vital fluids and transmitting a cocktail of deadly viruses. For most of the last thirty years,

keeping a hive alive has required a rigorous schedule of chemical treatments. Without human intervention, a typical colony rarely survives more than two years. Yet, researchers recently identified “feral” colonies in Southern California that have survived and flourished without a single drop of pesticide for over two decades.

### The power of “VSH”

The secret to their survival is a remarkable evolutionary trait known as Varroa Sensitive Hygiene (VSH). These unique California bees have developed an extraordinary sense of smell that allows them to detect the presence of mites hidden beneath the wax caps of developing larvae.

Once a mite is detected, the worker bees act with

surgical precision. They uncap the cell and remove the infested larvae, sacrificing a few individuals to save the entire colony. By interrupting the mite’s reproductive cycle, the bees keep the parasite levels low enough to remain harmless. This isn’t just a fluke; it is evolution in action, proving that nature often holds the keys to its own restoration.

### A sweet victory for agriculture

For the vacationers and residents of the Golden State, this discovery is more than just a scientific curiosity—it is a safeguard for the landscape itself. Southern California is famous for its agricultural bounty, from the vast almond groves of the Central Valley to the avocado orchards of Fall-

brook. These crops rely almost entirely on honeybees for pollination.

By studying these resilient bees, scientists hope to “back-cross” their genes into commercial honeybee stocks. This could eventually lead to a global population of bees that no longer require chemical assistance, ensuring that the fruits, nuts, and vegetables we enjoy on our holiday tables remain abundant and affordable.

### Nature’s resilience on display

Beyond the economic impact, the success of these bees is an inspirational reminder of ecological resilience. In an era often defined by environmental struggle, the “Super-Bees of SoCal” stand as a symbol of hope. □

# 'They're afraid': Nicaraguan writer Gioconda Belli on fighting censorship

## Panama City, Panama

Exiled Nicaraguan writer Gioconda Belli said on Wednesday that the government censored the publication of her latest novel in her home country because it is "afraid" to hear the truth.

Belli, one of Latin America's most influential literary voices, said husband-and-wife co-presidents Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo fear voices that expose their betrayal of the leftist Sandinista revolution that toppled the US-backed right-wing regime of Anastasio Somoza in 1979.

Belli served in the early administrations of Ortega, then a Sandinista guerrilla icon, but the United States has since branded his government a dictatorship, accusing it of seizing total power with a constitutional rewrite and crushing dissent.

Belli, who lives in Spain after the government stripped her of her Nicaraguan nationality in 2023, explores the theme of betrayal in her novel "A Silence Full of Whispers."

The writer sat down with AFP in Panama, where she is attending the Centroamerica Cuenta literary festival.



Nicaraguan writer Gioconda Belli poses before an interview with AFP at a hotel in Panama City on May 20, 2026.

**Question: How do you view the evolution of Central American literature?**

**Answer:** On one hand, it's still vibrant, but on the other, I feel it has suffered greatly due to the political context we're living through in Central America.

In a way, that suffering is the very thing that generates literature. It is truly a region that has endured great sacrifice. But at the same time, even under the cruelest dictatorships, it has still managed to produce fine literature.

**Q: What role can literature play in this context?**

**A:** Literature is a tremendous asset for Central America. It brings visibility to the region and it creates dreams, promises and possibilities. Literature cannot topple an authoritarian regime on its own, but it can encourage people to reflect on authoritarian tendencies and what that can mean for their own lives.

**Q: In North Korea, films from South Korea still manage to find their way into the**

**country despite censorship.**

**A:** We have ways to communicate nowadays. I've sent a PDF of my book to my friends and asked them to distribute it. They can't control everything, no matter how much they want to. They've already lost that battle.

**Q: Is there self-censorship in the region?**

**A:** Being censored by others is one thing but I do not censor myself. I believe that one of my roles, as someone harmed by this regime

and now living in exile, is to speak out on behalf of those who have no voice, to talk about what's happening.

There are so many people living in exile who fled with absolutely nothing left to their names. I have a name, a body of work, but there are people who are jobless, stripped of their pensions and left in a state of utter abandonment.

**'Intoxicated with power'**

**Q: Do you see any immediate possibility of being able to return home?**

**A:** I don't see it as imminent, but I could be mistaken, and that's where my hopes lie. You never know what the future holds. I do see the end in sight. Both Ortega and Murillo are becoming intoxicated with power and doing reckless things. They're very afraid, more afraid than we are. I believe they're wearing themselves down considerably.

**Q: What do you miss about Nicaragua?**

**A:** It fills me with great sadness to think that I've lost my home, a place I loved deeply because I felt like a guardian of the landscape. Seeing the lake, the volcanoes, the vegetation, the flowers, I miss all of that. □

## Winston Churchill's 'playful' paintings go on show in London

### London, United Kingdom

As Britain's wartime leader, Winston Churchill was known for his stirring

speeches, but a new London exhibition explores another side to his creativity as a passionate and pro-

lific artist.

The exhibition opening Saturday at the Wallace Collection will be the most significant display of the statesman's paintings for more than 60 years, including over 50 canvases, many of them rarely seen in public.

Churchill first tried painting during World War I after he resigned from the government over the 1915 failed Dardanelles naval attack. This was a "very difficult time in his life" when "he suddenly finds himself with all this unwanted leisure time", Lucy Davis, co-curator of the exhibition, told AFP.

"And he discovered painting as a way of releasing the stress, the anguish that the situation had caused him."

The museum presents a chronological survey starting with his first paintings, created with advice from renowned artist John Lavery, then canvases painted in the 1920s at Chartwell, the country house where Churchill lived with his family. Largely self-taught while associating with well-known painters, Churchill quickly became interested in landscape painting and drew inspiration from holidays in the south of France

to create brightly coloured canvases dominated by blues and ochre.

**- 'Loved the light' -**

Churchill "saw painting as a spur to travel" and "just loved the light and warmth and atmosphere, which he captures so beautifully", said Davis.

A whole room is dedicated to canvases inspired by trips to Morocco, including "The Tower of the Koutoubia Mosque", the only painting that Churchill did during World War II. A gift to US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the painting recently belonged to Hollywood star Angelina Jolie. □



A gallery assistant poses for a photograph by 'Bottlescape 1932' pictured at the "Winston Churchill: The Painter" exhibition at the Wallace Collection in central London on May 20, 2026.

## 'Wiped out': Ukraine's bird lovers long for peaceful skies

### Kryvyi Rig, Ukraine

When Viktor Sevidov looked up to the sky above Ukraine's war-scarred landscape, he was not watching out for incoming missiles or drones. Instead, he was looking for birds.

"There's a jay ... That's a bluethroat ... Do you see the hen harrier? We're lucky," the 37-year-old photographer told AFP.

Threatened in peacetime by deforestation, intensive agriculture, urbanization, pollution, hunting and climate change, Russia's 2022 invasion has wrought yet more suffering on Ukraine's birdlife.

The constant aerial bombardments have devastated wildlife and wrecked a delicate ecosystem across a 1,200-kilometre (750-mile) frontline including birds' nesting grounds and migratory routes.

Every dawn or dusk, Sevidov leaves his grey apartment block on the outskirts of Kryvyi Rig, an industrial city in central Ukraine, to see what birds he can spot.

"I see shaheds every day ... I want to see a clear sky," he said, referring to the Iranian-style attack drones that Russia fires hundreds of every day at Ukraine.

Amid a global biodiversity crisis, birds which play a vital role in pollination, seed dispersal and control-



Director of the Sadyba Nyushanik centre Iryna Snopko, 63, and her husband treat an injured stork at the shelter's aviary in the village of Voropaiv, Kyiv region on April 28, 2026, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

ling insect populations are one of the fastest declining groups.

Before Russia invaded, Sevidov photographed wildlife in the southern Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions.

Partly occupied by Russia and under constant bombardment, his previous spots are either "destroyed" or "unreachable". One day in 2024, he saw a Russian missile shot down above him while he was taking photos near Odesa.

"For me, it's disgusting ... I don't want to see that. I love nature. I love life. Not things that bring death."

### - 'Fatal' -

Contrary to what some may think, birds cannot always easily flee the dangers of war, zoologist Ewa Wegrzyn, from the Polish University of Rzeszow, said. Many species of birds are philopatric, meaning they either stay in the area they were born or regularly return to the same place to mate.

"Unfortunately, during war, philopatry can be fatal, as it leads birds along migration routes over areas affected by fighting," We-

grzyn said.

At a refuge centre in Voropaiv, near the capital Kyiv, more than 200 birds have been housed, including dozens wounded in the war.

"Birds very often get caught in anti-drone nets or become entangled in fiber-optic cables, injuring their wings, and they suffer terribly," Iryna Snopko, the shelter's 63-year-old director told AFP.

Alongside covering roads in huge nets to stop drone attacks, both Russia and Ukraine have fired thousands of tethered fiber-op-

tic attack drones -- with the webs of discarded cables stretching for dozens of kilometers.

Since 2022, the Sadyba Nyushanik centre has built a new aviary to house the influx of injured birds.

Among those taken in are a blind swan, an eagle with an amputated wing and a stork that suffered a concussion during an air attack.

They recently paid to treat an owl that had been severely burned when a drone crashed into its tree. It later succumbed to the injuries.

Walking around, Snopko spoke affectionately about the "love stories" that have formed among the storks. She showed off a female crow, Varia, who can say her own name.

"Vooaaria!" the bird croaked, a concoction of sounds that resembled a drunken old man.

### - 'Wiped out' -

When Russia invaded in 2022, Sevidov stopped taking photographs for two years not wanting to pursue his "hobby" while many of his friends were going off to war. He had wanted to join the army, but was declared unfit for service as one of his arms has been disabled since birth. □

## Vets bid to save Kosovo's stray dogs from cull through sterilization

### Podujevo, Kosovo

Panting puppies lie exhausted, wedged between the plastic bags and cartons spilling down a hillside in northern Kosovo, while other dogs snuffle around the dump hunting for edible morsels.

The sheer number of canines roaming free has become bothersome, and locals in the Podujevo district have drafted in experts to solve the problem "in the most humane way possible", according to vet Albatrit Halili.

He is part of a team of local veterinarians led by the Four Paws NGO who are sterilizing and vaccinating the mutts to keep the pop-

ulation under control.

Some estimates put their number at 50,000 in the tiny Balkan country, sandwiched between Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

"I believe this program is the only viable solution," said Halili.

The animals don't seem to mind -- one puppy wags its tail and bounces playfully as its cage is loaded into a van, while another enjoys having its coat ruffled by the vets.

Certainly they are better off this way than the more customary practice of culling.

And as there are not

enough shelters to house them, these animals will be released and able to return to their life roaming the rubbish dumps.

Podujevo, which shares a long border with Serbia, is one of the worst-affected areas.

"In the absence of cross-border cooperation, the dogs can move around, sometimes on their territory, sometimes on ours," said Podujevo mayor Shpejtim Bulliqi.

This makes it difficult, he says, to even count the number of dogs.

But Luciana D'Abramo from Four Paws is confident that they will succeed,

partly because the local community is on board with the campaign.

"We knew that there were lots of (attempts) and lots of

goodwill to find solutions," she said, but the latest effort would be longer-term and better planned. □



Members of the animal rights organization Four Paws prepare to sterilize a dog on a mobile clinic near the town of Podujevo on May 19, 2026.



This picture taken on April 9, 2026 shows two dusky langurs called "Kim" (L) and "Sunny" (R), named by the Langur Project Penang (LPP), at a playground near a residential area in the Tanjung Bungah area of George Town on Malaysia's Penang Island.

## Sky bridges, citizen science protect endangered Malaysia monkeys

### Tanjung Bungah, Malaysia

A graceful black monkey edges across a swaying red rope bridge strung over a busy residential road in Malaysia's Penang, watched by local conservationists who carefully record her movements.

For Malaysia's endangered dusky langurs, recognisable by the "masks" of white fur that ring their eyes, survival increasingly depends on such man-made crossings and the work of "citizen scientists".

A fragmented habitat, conflict with local communities, and poaching have all pushed the species to endangered status.

But the Langur Project Penang (LPP) conservation group hopes that low-tech engineering and high-tech community engagement can help protect the species, also known as the dusky leaf monkey.

Key to their efforts is helping the monkeys navigate fragmented habitat crisscrossed by busy roads where the animals are often killed.

LPP founder Yap Jo Leen realised the need for a solution when she saw dusky langurs repeatedly risking road crossings as she carried out fieldwork in 2016.

"I realised that they don't

just stay in the forest. They also cross roads to the coastal area to look for food," she told AFP.

She came up with the idea of building some kind of crossing, and pairing the solution with community engagement.

"At the time, the idea was wild because no one in Malaysia had actually done it before" she said of the crossing plan.

Similar canopy bridges have helped other endangered primates elsewhere, including in Indonesia, where an orangutan was recently seen using such a crossing for the first time.

### - 'Safe haven' -

Yap's team experimented with different materials before settling on upcycled fire hoses "twisted to mimic tree branches".

They are suspended over roads from a tree on one side and a custom-installed pole on the other.

LPP has now installed three, including in April in the coastal suburb and beach destination of Batu Ferringhi.

Yap said the group's research showed they work. At one site, at least eight monkeys died in traffic accidents between 2016 and 2018. No deaths have been recorded since the crossing

was installed in 2019.

The crossings also allow groups of monkeys that were once largely confined to an area to expand their range.

"They have more opportunity to venture closer to the hills... and find their way to a safe haven," she said.

That not only benefits the animals, but decreases pressure on local communities that have come into conflict with hungry roving bands of dusky langurs seeking food in urban neighbourhoods.

Addressing that conflict is another part of LPP's efforts.

It recruits members of the local community to serve as "citizen scientists" who track langur movements, collect data and record GPS coordinates using spreadsheets and the Wikiloc trail app.

The volunteers receive a small stipend and training in fieldwork in return for committing to tracking the monkeys for at least three months.

The data helps researchers understand more about the monkeys, including their home range and their feeding habits, and could one day even help guide reforestation efforts. □



A reveler with his face painted takes part in the annual "Pring Ka-Ek" or "spirit house" festival to pray for fortune and rain on the outskirts of Phnom Penh on May 21, 2026.

## Cambodian avatars pray to spirits for rain, peace with Thailand

### Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Wearing leaf skirts and with brightly painted faces depicting mythical spirits, Cambodian revellers danced through village streets on Thursday, praying to an ancient guardian for rain, good fortune and peace with neighbouring Thailand.

The two countries agreed to a fragile ceasefire in December after two rounds of border clashes killed dozens of people.

Both countries still have military forces stationed along their disputed frontier, with the two sides trading accusations of truce violations.

"We don't want any more war. We want it to end. So we pray to the guardian spirit Pring Ka-Ek to make sure our troops at the front line stay safe," said Tum Vannak, 24, whose face was painted to represent the mythical giant.

"We get whatever we ask for from him, so we celebrate the festival every year," he told AFP.

Residents of Phum Boeung village on the outskirts of the capital, Phnom Penh, said they have been marking the occasion for generations.

A few hundred people on Thursday joined a parade through the village to the shrine of Pring Ka-Ek.

With black-and-white stripes painted across his face and chest, and his teeth painted with black nail polish, Sem Pov, 30, joined the procession on horseback, saying the crowd was praying for "a lot of rain so our crops and rice will be abundant".

Among the crowd, a group of boys used charcoal residue from a cooking pot to paint themselves black, drawing inspiration from local folklore, while women dressed in elegant traditional clothing.

Several men beat drums hung from their shoulders, and others carried a large prop knife to represent the weapon of slain warriors carried by their spirits as they marched.

Ath Srey Oun, 22, lit incense sticks and knelt before the shrine, its front filled with plates of fruit, soft drink bottles and other offerings.

"I prayed and asked the spirit to make sure our Cambodia does not have war," she said. □

# The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today loves to share parts of the Aruban culture with our readers, diving into (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this article, we'll look at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

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

### Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called 'Dos Placa'; 10-cent coins were called 'Debchi'; 25-cent coins were called 'Diez Placa' and the 50-cent coin was



once called 'Yotin' (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

### Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

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

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the



Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

### Current design and symbolism

**10 florin**  
On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Tortuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushirib-

ana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

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

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

**100 florin**  
This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we

see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

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

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

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba (BNA).



## Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies



(Oranjestad)—Aruba's nature is very diverse and is home to several beautiful and majestic wildlife. Among these is the bright Trupial, whose angelic voice is always heard with the rising sun; the cuddly parakeet, always in company of another, and the majestic Warawara, a mighty bird that can be seen soaring in the clear blue skies.

### Trupial

Icterus icterus, or known locally as the Venezuelan or Orange Troupial, is a striking songbird whose bright orange feathers can be spotted from a far distance. Known to be the first bird to sing at the first sign of sunrise, this beloved songbird likes to wake up with a tune. But don't let their angelic songs fool you; the Trupial can be a bit aggressive towards any threat, protective over their nesting spots—nesting spots they most likely stole from other birds. Trupials can be



seen regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

### Prikichi (parakeet)

The Brown-throated Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax*) became the national bird of Aruba back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has been declining since the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwih tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

### Warawara



The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a height of 41 to 60 cm, their wingspan can measure up to 125 cm. Known as the "garbage man", this bird of prey mostly feeds on dead animals. Its coat is dark brown, with a cream-colored neck, orange face, thick beak and long legs. The Warawara prefers to build its nest in the middle of tall cacti and produces a rattling, screaming sound, throwing its head back onto its back while calling.

While these birds are a beautiful sight to behold, it is very important to keep your distance and respect their habitats. This is how we protect our wildlife. By admiring the beauty of Aruba in a safe and respectful manner, we can do our part in protecting our sacred nature. □

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation

## Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use



**ORANJESTAD—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home rem-**

**edies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.**

### Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa\* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

### Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and

make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

### Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world



and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan\* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis. □

\*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

\*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.



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**Blackstone Beach**

(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba; the stones that cover the beach and the shape of it has been crafted for thousands of years through volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy

to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still en-



joy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! □

**Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!**

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building "Cocolishi", is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two

separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also

became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into



the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and

want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



## Another treasure of Aruba's beaches: Sea Glass!

(Oranjestad)—It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothed, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process.

It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass.



The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its

rough edges.

Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage

in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car

tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown, green and clear glass.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation!☐



(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

**Ingredients:**

- 4 cups of wheat flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
- 1 tsp salt

## A quick snack for the road Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

- 1 tbsp sugar
- 0.5 cup of melted butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 egg

**Directions:**

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to

your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few.☐

## 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 re-

ceived this name from the Hill.

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

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

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; AV. □

## Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!

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

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? This is an informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamentu, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, known as "Santa Rosa", wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

### Picuda, *Sphyrna barracuda*, Greater Barracuda

Well known is the Picuda on the island—Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is *Sphyrna barracuda*. It is a widely caught fish. It is

found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a so-called "ambush predator" that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for

its white flesh in fish soup. In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

### Description

The Picuda is a long fish,

with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, the belly, is whiter, while the top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the

tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more "full" than that of mullet or cone-fish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets close.

### In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible without any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod, or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions. □

Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

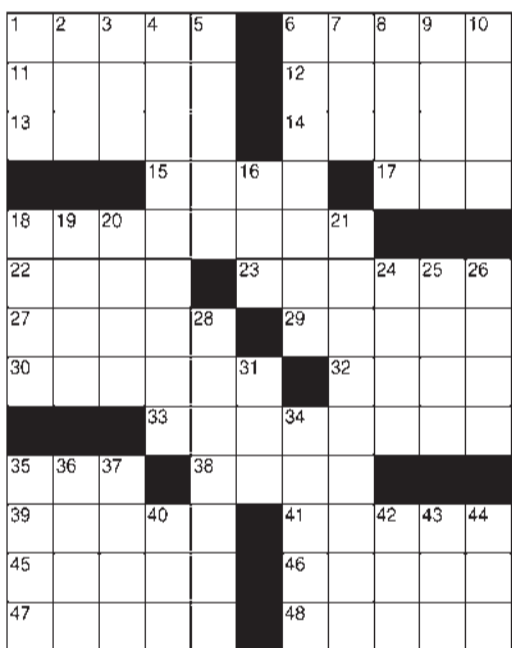


**CROSSWORD**

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**



- ACROSS**
- 47 Baseball manager
  - 1 President born in Hawaii
  - 6 Church offshoots
  - 11 Mamas' mates
  - 12 Snow house
  - 13 Deuce beaters
  - 14 Farm animals
  - 15 Plant with fronds
  - 17 Cow call
  - 18 Mower's place
  - 22 Edit menu choice
  - 23 Made speeches
  - 27 Puts away
  - 29 Damascus's nation
  - 30 Seoul citizen
  - 32 Supply with cash
  - 33 Having no stabilizing ties
  - 35 Brewery sight
  - 38 Half of a sextet
  - 39 Justice Samuel
  - 41 In the know
  - 45 Teakettle output
  - 46 Happen again
- DOWN**
- 1 Make a choice
  - 2 Saloon
  - 3 Gorilla, for one
  - 4 1620 ship
  - 5 Farm animals
  - 6 Silent speakers
  - 7 Sense of self
  - 8 Chowder bit
  - 9 Dorothy's dog
  - 10 Mediocre
  - 16 Pi follower
  - 18 Walrus feature
  - 19 Savvy about
  - 20 Smell
  - 21 Purplish bloom
  - 24 Factual
  - 25 Start of a German count
  - 26 Fathers
  - 28 Island off Africa
  - 31 Negative link
  - 34 Pageant topper
  - 35 Expansive
  - 36 Singing voice
  - 37 Layer
  - 40 Road sealer
  - 42 High card
  - 43 Enter the race
  - 44 Historic age



5-1

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.

5-1 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

L XLVAW CNAYQSA ELJG NF

VGLKKW PSFA L IGGANHB.

— PSKNL EYNKZ

**Cryptoquote:** YOU CAN ALWAYS EDIT A BAD PAGE. YOU CAN'T EDIT A BLANK PAGE. — JODI PICOULT

**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.



**Supermarket hours**

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

**Safety**

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

**CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE**

02 SAT	<b>CARIBBEAN PRINCESS</b> Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C
05 TUE	<b>CELEBRITY SILHOUTTE</b> Arrival: 08:00   Departure: 17:00   Berth: B
	<b>CARNIVAL MAGIC</b> Arrival: 9:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C
06 WED	<b>GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS</b> Arrival: 11:59   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C
12 TUE	<b>CARNIVAL HORIZON</b> Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: B
	<b>GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS</b> Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C
19 TUE	<b>ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS</b> Arrival: 7:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: B
	<b>GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS</b> Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C
20 WED	<b>ALLURE OF THE SEAS</b> Arrival: 7:00   Departure: 16:00   Berth: I
	<b>CARNIVAL VISTA</b> Arrival: 7:00   Departure: 16:00   Berth: C
21 THU	<b>CARNIVAL VENEZIA</b> Arrival: 9:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C
26 TUE	<b>CARNIVAL HORIZON</b> Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: B
	<b>GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS</b> Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

5/22

**Answer to previous puzzle**

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

Difficulty: ★★★

5/21

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# 'Their story is our story': Pigeons and humans, 3,500 years together

## Paris, France

They have been our meat and our messengers, a source of fertilizer and a religious symbol: while pigeons are now mostly reviled as dirty city pests, they long played an important role in human society. Now, research published on Thursday has revealed that the humble birds were first domesticated 3,500 years ago, meaning they have been enmeshed in our lives for nearly a millennium longer than previously thought.



A rock pigeon walks on the warning track during the fourth inning between the Toronto Blue Jays and the New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium on May 20, 2026 in the Bronx borough of New York City.

"Humans forgetting about pigeons happened relatively recently in human history," Anderson Carter, a bioarchaeologist at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, told AFP. Pigeons were still a useful part of society as recently as the 19th and 20th centuries, explained the lead author of a new study in the journal Antiquity.

"They were still being used to carry messages and even had an important role in wars in particular," she added.

"But then a lot of technological advancements happened, the telegraph was invented and then the telephone, and pigeons were out of a job". However, because we had spent thousands of

years conditioning them to live alongside us, the birds stayed nearby.

It was only when huge cities emerged after the industrial revolution that "there was a rising view that they were pests, dirty and spreading diseases," Carter said.

Now, "anti-pigeon architecture such as spikes on top of buildings" are a common sight, she added.

### - Free bird -

The common pigeon or rock dove originally came from the Mediterranean region. Genomic analysis has shown that today's city-dwellers are closely related to wild doves from the Middle East.

For the new research, a Dutch-led team of scientists went to the Hala Sultan Tekke archaeological site

on the shores of the Larnaca salt lake in southeast Cyprus.

They analyzed 159 ancient pigeon bones to find out how they lived and died and look for signs of human intervention, such as cuts. Biometric and isotopic analysis revealed that the pigeons lived in the 13th and 14th centuries BC, during the Bronze Age.

By extracting collagen from the bones, the scientists were able to find out their ratios of nitrogen and carbon, which is closely linked to an animal's diet.

The results were then compared with animals and humans found in Cyprus dating to the same period. □

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**ARUBA TODAY NEWS**

# Spotify, Universal strike deal for fan AI remixes

**New York, United States**  
Spotify is teaming up with Universal Music Group to let users create AI-powered remixes and covers of songs by artists on the label for an extra fee on top of a standard subscription.

The new feature, announced Thursday, will only apply to artists who have given their consent, and both the original performer and songwriter will receive a share of any revenue generated.

“For the first time, fans will be able to legally create covers and remixes from participating artists and songwriters’ catalogs, with both the original artist and the songwriter sharing in the value created,” said Charlie Hellman, Spotify’s head of music, speaking at the company’s investor day. Until now, Spotify had banned AI-generated music derived from a specific artist’s work without their express authorization, though it does allow AI music to be



**Charlie Hellman, Global Head of Music, Spotify speaks onstage at the Spotify Investor Day 2026 Morning Presentation at Highline Studios on May 21, 2026 in New York City.**

uploaded more broadly, including content associated with artists whose image and identity were generated using artificial intelligence. The deal puts Spotify in direct competition with Suno and Udio, the two dominant AI music apps on the market, both of which have been posting strong growth.

After initially allowing users to create AI music without agreements in place with artists or labels, both startups have shifted course in recent months.

Udio has signed deals with Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group, which also reached an agreement with Suno. UMG and Sony are none-

theless still in litigation with Suno, with proceedings ongoing before a US federal court in Massachusetts. Hellman said the feature would give artists and songwriters “a brand new source of income on top of what they already earn on Spotify.” Universal Music Group CEO Lucian Grainge called the initiative “firmly artist-cen-

tric, rooted in responsible AI,” saying it would “drive growth for the entire ecosystem.”

Also announced at the investor day, Spotify said it would give paying subscribers early access to concert tickets for their favorite artists before they go on general sale.

The new service called “Reserved” is launching in the United States this summer before expanding to other markets.

Subscribers will be selected based on listening data including how often they stream a given artist, the range of tracks they play from that artist’s catalog and whether they have saved songs to their library. They will have around 24 hours to purchase up to two tickets through a partner ticketing platform, the company said.

Spotify said the initiative would help route tickets to genuine fans rather than scalper bots, which have long frustrated both concertgoers and artists. □



**Editor**  
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.  
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668  
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.  
Acc. #23951903  
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

**Editors**  
Pilar Flores  
Richard Brooks  
Angenette Figuereo  
Oriana Geerman

**Sales**  
Mark Gomes  
Sulaika Croes

**Classifieds**  
classified@cspnv.com

**Distribution and Collection**  
accounting@bondia.com

**Social / Website**  
Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22  
T: 582-7800  
E: news@arubatoday.com  
W: www.arubatoday.com  
f @ArubaTodayNews

## Musk’s SpaceX bonus comes with unique condition: colonize Mars

**New York, United States**  
SpaceX’s blockbuster IPO filing included some out of this world details, including a provision that founder Elon Musk’s massive bonus only kicks in if one million humans settle on Mars. The bonus structure, laid out in SpaceX’s prospectus filed with US regulators



**SpaceX, Twitter and electric car maker Tesla CEO Elon Musk looks on as he speaks during his visit at the Vivatech technology startups and innovation fair at the Porte de Versailles exhibition center in Paris, on June 16, 2023.**

Wednesday, reads less like a compensation agreement and more like a science fiction plot. Musk’s bonus is contingent on SpaceX’s stock market value hitting targets ranging from \$400 billion to \$6 trillion along with the company moving a million people to a planet 140 million miles (225 million kilometers) away.

Musk describes that ambition as essential to the long-term survival of the human race, though most experts see it as being at least decades away.

Still, Musk will do just fine if the IPO goes ahead in the coming weeks as planned. At the company’s reported target valuation of \$1.75 trillion, Musk’s exist-

ing stake would be worth an estimated \$735 billion before a single person sets foot on the Red Planet. A second, smaller bonus ties an additional 60 million shares to a different moonshot: building data centers in orbit capable of delivering 100 terawatts of computing power per year a figure that dwarfs anything that exists on Earth today. SpaceX filed for its long-awaited IPO Wednesday, targeting a listing on the Nasdaq stock exchange under the ticker “SPCX” in what could be the largest public offering in Wall Street history.

The company’s Starship rocket whose latest iteration could launch Thursday is explicitly designed with Mars colonization in mind. □

## Steelers quarterback Aaron Rodgers says 2026 his last NFL season

**Washington, United States**  
Future Hall of Fame quarterback Aaron Rodgers said Wednesday that 2026 will be his last NFL season. "Yes, this is it," Rodgers told reporters when asked if the upcoming campaign would be his last.

The four-time NFL Most Valuable Player this week signed a one-year contract to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers, the team he joined last year under then head coach Mike Tomlin. The deal reunites him with his former Green Bay Packers head coach Mike McCarthy, who joined the Steelers in January after Tomlin stepped down in the wake of Pittsburgh's playoff exit in the wild card round. "There's definitely a full-circle aspect to it that piqued my interest," the 42-year-old Rodgers said of playing for McCarthy again. Rodgers acknowledged that there was "some doubt for sure" as to whether he would return for a 22nd season. "But I had a good conversation with Mike going back to when he was hired and it's nice to come back. "It felt different than last year, because I knew some of the guys and some of



**Aaron Rodgers #8 of the Pittsburgh Steelers throws the ball against the Houston Texans in the first quarter of an NFL wild card playoff game at Acrisure Stadium on January 12, 2026 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.**

the people who work here and stuff, so it felt good coming in."

Rodgers spent the bulk of his career working with McCarthy in Green Bay, where the duo won a Super Bowl together in 2011 ironically against the Steelers.

Rodgers's future had been in question ever since the Steelers' playoff exit in January, when the veteran quarterback was sacked

four times and was held to just 17 completions in a bruising 30-6 loss to the Houston Texans.

However speculation he would return increased after the Steelers opted to hire McCarthy, who made no secret of his desire to see Rodgers keep playing. On Wednesday, McCarthy said everyone around the Steelers was "extremely excited" when Rodgers's return became official.

"I think that speaks for it-

self and speaks volumes of what he's established in just his short time here," the coach said.

Rodgers, who won MVP honors in 2011, 2014, 2020 and 2021 with the Packers, had joined the Steelers on a one-year deal in June of 2025 after a disappointing season with the New York Jets.

### - 'I wanted to play' -

Shortly after inking that deal Rodgers told ESPN's

"Pat McAfee Show" that he was "pretty sure" that the 2025 season would be his last, one "really about finishing with a lot of love and fun and peace for the career that I've had".

Rodgers had said in January after the Steelers were eliminated from the playoffs by the Houston Texans, that he wouldn't make any "emotional decisions" on his future.

He said the departure of Tomlin strengthened his belief that he wouldn't be returning, at least not to the Steelers, but the chance to team up again with McCarthy was too great a lure to resist, Rodgers said.

"I love Mike (Tomlin), man," Rodgers said. "I really appreciated the opportunity to come in last year and loved my experience with him. I thought, when he said he was stepping away ... that was probably it for me in Pittsburgh."

"But when the decision came in to hire (McCarthy), I started opening my mind back up to coming back," added Rodgers who said he encouraged Steelers general manager Omar Khan to interview McCarthy for the job not really expecting that he would. □

## Gilgeous-Alexander stars as Thunder level series with Spurs

**Los Angeles, United States**  
Shai Gilgeous-Alexander pulled the Oklahoma City Thunder level with San Antonio on Wednesday, as the defending NBA champions won their second heavyweight Western Conference finals clash 122-113.

Having been largely kept in check in Monday's game one loss to the Spurs, the league's back-to-back Most Valuable Player scored 30 points and provided nine assists.

The Thunder's home win poises the series at 1-1, with the teams next headed to San Antonio for games three and four on Friday and Saturday.

"The guys brought it tonight, knowing what it would have meant if we

lost this one," said Gilgeous-Alexander.

"We brought the energy from the jump."

Two nights after it had taken a double-overtime classic to separate them, the two teams with the best NBA regular-season records put on another intense display.

Following a tied first quarter, the Thunder roared ahead for an 11-point half-time lead.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who had endured a sluggish start in the previous game, led the charge from tip-off, regularly scoring from mid-range.

His team hustled for 13 turnovers worth 16 points in the first half alone.

The Spurs' Victor Wembanyama having dazzled in

game one, with 41 points and 24 rebounds -- was stifled, frequently wrestling with Isaiah Hartenstein and double-teamed by an aggressive Thunder defense. But his teammate Stephon Castle responded in style, leaping for a sensational dunk over the head of seven-foot-tall Hartenstein that left the crowd and players gasping.

From 13 points down, the Spurs without starting guard De'Aaron Fox for a second consecutive contest due to a right ankle sprain rallied to pull level midway through the third. But San Antonio never quite managed to retake the lead, with Oklahoma City soaking up the pressure.

"The guys were ready to play, (we) didn't get dis-

couraged by the runs they made," said Gilgeous-Alexander, after the game. "Obviously, they're a good team, they are gonna make runs."

On a night of intense physicality, Oklahoma City's Jalen Williams and San Antonio's Dylan Harper both left the court with injuries, and did not return. □



**Shai Gilgeous-Alexander #2 of the Oklahoma City Thunder shoots against Stephon Castle #5 of the San Antonio Spurs during the first quarter in Game Two of the NBA Western Conference Finals at Paycom Center on May 20, 2026 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.**



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## Sinner, Djokovic kept apart in French Open draw

### Paris, France

Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic will not be able to meet until the French Open final after the pair were placed in opposite halves of the men's draw on Thursday, while Coco Gauff could face Aryna Sabalenka in the women's semis.

Sinner, the red-hot men's title favorite in the absence of injured rival Carlos Alcaraz, will start his bid for a maiden Roland Garros crown against French wildcard Clement Tabur, the world number 165.

Women's world number one Sabalenka faces a tough potential road to the final, with Naomi Osaka, Victoria Mboko and reigning champion Gauff all potential hurdles for the Belarusian.

The build-up to the event, which gets under way on Sunday, has been overshadowed by threats from players to boycott some



Italy's Jannik Sinner holds the trophy after winning the men's final of the ATP Rome Open tennis tournament against Norway's Casper Ruud at the Foro Italico in Rome on May 17, 2026.

of their media duties over a pay dispute with Grand Slam tournament organizers. "We are not going to

budge," tournament director Amelie Mauresmo told reporters at the draw in Paris, adding she was a

"little saddened" by the situation.

"We have prize money that has (...) doubled in

10 years, and has also increased significantly recently."

World number one Sinner is slated to meet big-hitting American fifth seed Ben Shelton in the quarterfinals. Daniil Medvedev is a possible semi-final opponent for the Italian.

The Russian gave Sinner a rare scare in the Italian Open semis earlier this month before eventually succumbing in three sets. Sinner won his sixth consecutive Masters 1000 trophy by beating Casper Ruud in the Rome final. That made the four-time Grand Slam champion only the second man to complete the set of all nine Masters 1000 titles, after Novak Djokovic.

Third seed Djokovic will kick off his latest tilt at a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title against home player Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard. □