

Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba



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Xi sets red lines for Trump despite lavish White House welcome

Washington, United States

Xi Jinping told Donald Trump on Thursday that Beijing and Washington must peacefully manage their superpower rivalry, as the U.S. president gave his Chinese counterpart a lavish welcome to the White House.

While Trump hailed their "truly great friendship" on a day of sweeping pomp and circumstance, Xi used his state visit to lay down China's red lines on AI, Taiwan and the Iran war.

Behind the pageantry and symbolic gestures like Trump taking Xi inside his Marine One helicopter the talks were focused on tensions that continue to divide the world's two largest economies.

In his opening remarks with Trump, Xi said the two countries must ensure there is "no conflict and no confrontation between us."

Xi also warned that the development of artificial intelligence should be "always under human control" in contrast to Trump, who has repeatedly dismissed warnings that AI could threaten humanity itself.

Trump's remarks struck a warmer tone, underscoring the US president's long-



China's President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump look on during a military review in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC, on September 24, 2026.

term efforts to woo the Chinese leader.

"President Xi and I have made tremendous strides on the issues facing our two countries," Trump said after greeting Xi for his first visit to the White House in over a decade.

The 80-year-old Trump said that the pair would "discuss pressing issues concerning security, technology, and super intelligence SI," his name for artificial intel-

ligence.

- 'Prudence' -

But later as they met in the Oval Office, Xi urged Trump to show "prudence" and oppose independence for the flashpoint of Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims.

The Chinese leader whose country has reportedly shared intelligence with Tehran also urged Trump to end the Iran war "through negotiation as soon as pos-

sible."

Few breakthroughs are expected during Xi's state visit. Instead the trip is more about the spectacle as the world's two biggest economies seek manage points of friction.

A formal welcome on the White House South Lawn launched Thursday's events, before Trump and Xi inspected a military parade on the newly paved-over Rose Garden.

American military jets in-

cluding a B-2 bomber of the type that bombed Iranian nuclear facilities last year then staged a flyover as U.S. and Chinese flags flew over the West Wing.

In the Oval Office, Trump joked that the Chinese had the friendliest press corps.

His comment came days after he barred outlets CNN, MS Now and Politico from the White House -- although they returned on Thursday after a court order.

Trump later walked Xi out to see the new helipad he has built at the White House, and took the Chinese leader aboard his helicopter one of the most exclusive and sensitive pieces of U.S. military equipment.

- 'Great meeting' -

"We had a great meeting," Trump said, as the pair ignored questions on subjects including Iran, Taiwan, fentanyl trafficking and jailed Hong Kong pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai. Trump added that Xi was an "expert on stone aside from many other things and he loves good granite," referring to the material used for the helipad, which he has boasted will last a million years. □

Democrats sue Trump admin to bar U.S. armed agents from poll sites

Washington, United States

Democratic leaders have sued US President Donald Trump's administration to stop armed federal agents being sent to polling places during November's midterm elections, arguing that even the threat of deployments could intimidate voters.

The party is accusing immigration and law enforcement agencies of asserting authority to send armed officers to voting locations despite longstanding federal restrictions on such deployments.

Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries, the top Democrats in the Senate and House of Representatives, joined congressional and governors' campaign organizations on the case, filed late Wednesday in federal court in Washing-

ton.

The administration has said it has no formal plan to station agents at polling sites but senior officials have declined to rule out their presence in certain circumstances.

Homeland Security Sec-

retary Markwayne Mullin said this month that immigration agents could turn up in response to a threat or to serve a warrant on someone they were pursuing.

FBI Director Kash Patel similarly told senators last week

that agents would go to polling places "if there's a reason to go there because there's been a violation of law."

And Trump himself was asked in May if he would send National Guard troops or immigration agents to voting locations and would not rule it out.

"Well you know what? I'd do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections," he told reporters.

Democrats argue that such statements amount to a policy authorizing federal agents at polling locations and risk discouraging voters particularly naturalized citizens and others who may fear encounters with immigration authorities.

"Voters need not actually

be arrested, questioned, or even approached" for the threat to be intimidating, the lawsuit says.

The complaint cites a federal law generally barring armed federal personnel from election sites except when needed to repel armed enemies, as well as a provision of the Voting Rights Act prohibiting voter intimidation.

It asks the court to block armed federal officers from operating around polling places, ballot drop boxes and other locations where votes are cast, collected or counted, from early voting through post-election ballot processing. The Democrats also cite several incidents involving immigration agents around voting sites earlier this year. □



A voting booth sits empty at Naperville Municipal Center on the first day of early voting ahead of the November 3 midterm elections in Naperville, Illinois, on September 24, 2026.



Journalists gather in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room in the West Wing of the White House on September 24, 2026 in Washington, DC.

CNN, MS NOW, Politico allowed back in White House after judge's order

Washington, United States

CNN, MS NOW and Politico were allowed back into the White House on Thursday, six days after being banned by President Donald Trump, after a federal judge ordered that the journalists have their access restored. District Judge Timothy Kelly ruled overnight that revoking the White House press credentials of the three media outlets "likely violated their constitutional due process rights."

Reporters for CNN, MS NOW and Politico who attempted to return to the White House early Thursday ahead of a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping were initially turned away by the Secret Service but were allowed in later around midday.

Journalists from other outlets surrounded CNN's tent on the White House driveway and filmed reporter Betsy Klein as she reported live following her return. "Welcome back," several journalists said.

CNN, MS NOW and Politico had requested an urgent court hearing on Thursday after their reporters were initially barred from the White House despite the judge's order.

In his ruling, Kelly took issue with how the White House went about expelling the three news organizations.

"The 'general rule' is that 'individuals must receive notice and an opportunity to be heard before the Government deprives them' of a constitutionally protected interest," the judge said.

Trump has long attacked media that have aired critical coverage of him, repeatedly blasting the press as the "enemy of the people." The Republican president barred CNN, MS NOW and Politico from the White House on Friday for distributing what he called "fake news" and "fiction and lies."

They filed a joint lawsuit asking for a temporary restraining order against the ban on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which upholds the right to a free press.

Ahead of the ruling, the Department of Justice had argued that Trump can "control reporters' access to restricted presidential areas, such as the Oval Office."

"Access to the White House is a privilege not a right," it said.

- National security? -

The White House Press Office accused CNN in a letter to the cable news outlet of "trafficking in verifiable falsehoods about national

security and other issues, and publishing sensitive or classified information," with similar accusations leveled against MS NOW and Politico.

The letter to CNN cited several stories about the U.S.-Iran war and a story on Trump's plans to build a military bunker below the planned East Wing ballroom which allegedly "disclosed 'top-secret' construction details."

Kelly, who was appointed by Trump during his first term, appeared unconvinced.

"The Court is skeptical at least on this record that Defendants' interest in safeguarding national security is the actual motivation for, or is even advanced by, the revocation of Plaintiffs' hard passes," the judge said.

In a rare move, the top five U.S. broadcasters said that they were halting pool coverage of the White House where a broadcaster films on behalf of all television outlets for the day in solidarity with CNN.

"The public has a vital interest in receiving accurate, independent information about its government. No administration should restrict a news organization because it objects to its reporting," ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox and NBC said. □



New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers detain US actress Susan Sarandon (C) and other pro-Palestinian demonstrators who were blocking First Avenue near the United Nations headquarters building, ahead of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 24, 2026.

Hollywood stars among arrests in NY anti-Netanyahu protest

New York, United States

Movie star Susan Sarandon and "Hacks" actress Hannah Einbinder were among people detained by police in New York as they moved in to break up a protest against Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday.

AFP footage shows NYPD officers cuffing "Thelma & Louise" star Sarandon at the demo in the city as the Israeli prime minister was readying to address the United Nations General Assembly.

The New York Post reported Einbinder had also been marched away from the demonstration organized by Jewish Voice for Peace.

There was no immediate NYPD response to AFP requests for comment on the detentions.

Protesters holding banners that read "Stop Arming Israel" and "End the Genocide" were staging a sit-in on city streets as Netanyahu gave a defiant speech at the U.N. Inside the General Assembly, dozens of envoys from across the world walked out as Netanyahu began his speech, where he assailed both enemies and allies that have crossed him in recent months, including Britain and France, who have recently moved to recognize the state of Palestine.

"They accuse Israel, tiny Israel, of colonialism some colonialism. And who's accusing us? Among them are people in Britain and in France. For God's sakes, they invented the term," he told the assembly.

Sarandon, whose movie hits also include "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," "Dead Man Walking" and "The Witches of Eastwick," is no stranger to protests over Israel's war in Gaza.

The U.S. actress told journalists at the Venice Film Festival this month that she was losing work because of her outspoken views.

"I've still had movies taken away recently because there are agencies that are telling people not to hire me still. But that's the power structure," she said.

"I think there has been a change in terms of the understanding of the situation and the general public, but there are still very strongly held positions within my industry that are held by Zionists and who have not relaxed their feelings towards me.

"But I found my family, I found my people, and I'm okay," she added. □

U2 at 50: Irish rockers reveal anniversary album

Dublin, Ireland

Irish superstars U2 revealed the name of their new album on Wednesday Carnival de Luz days ahead of the 50th anniversary of their first encounter as schoolboys in a Dublin kitchen in 1976.

Speaking on a podcast, lead singer Bono confirmed long-standing rumors that they were preparing to release their 15th album, thrilling fans who are set to attend commemorative events this weekend in the Irish capital.

"I can't say it. I'm going to say it," Bono teased on an Irish Times podcast which looked back on their career.

"The new album is called Carnival de Luz ... it's strong stuff," Bono added while reminiscing about the four-piece band's formation in the kitchen of drummer Larry Mullen.

That seminal moment in rock history on September 25, 1976, is set to be celebrated during a U250 event organized by fans in Dublin this weekend, as well as with a new two euro coin issued by the Central Bank of Ireland on Friday.

The new album and the half-century anniversary underline the longevity of



(L-R) Irish musicians Adam Clayton, Bono, Larry Mullen Jr, and The Edge from U2 arrive for the 45th Kennedy Center Honors at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, on December 4, 2022.

one of Ireland's biggest musical exports.

The landmark also begs questions about the secret of their success which has seen the band outlast their peers, avoid messy break-ups, and continue to fill stadiums.

- Reinvention -

While they could barely play their instruments at their first teenage rehearsal and nearly lost their record contract after a dis-

appointing reception for second album "October", they went on to produce some of the biggest hits of the 1980s and 90s.

In total, they are estimated to have sold 175 million albums and count more than 23 million monthly listeners on Spotify today.

"Every album, they keep pushing creative boundaries," Alex Conyngham, owner of Slane Castle in Ireland, where the band have performed and recorded

at several times over their career, told AFP.

"That's always been in their DNA. They've never been a band that have just rested on the hits."

The new album -- the first since 2017's "Songs of Experience" follows the release of new music this year including "Street of Dreams" in July.

Aidan Alcock, director of Dublin's famous Windmill Lane recording studios, where U2 recorded their

debut album "Boy" and its two successors, also paid tribute to their ability to keep moving.

"They're always full of surprises. And I think that's what keeps them going as well," he told AFP.

Bono told the Irish Times that a drive for perfection served as his motivation, as well as the pleasure of hanging out with the band. "I suppose it's always the thought that just around the corner lies the perfect song or the perfect performance ... it's mad to say but that's still the drug of choice in our band," he told the paper.

- 'Soft power' -

Composed of Bono, The Edge, Adam Clayton, and Larry Mullen, U2 have become symbols of Ireland's rich musical culture and history, but also some of the best-known faces of the country overseas.

At an exhibition celebrating their 50 years together in Paris on Tuesday, the Irish ambassador to France, Alison Milton, paid tribute to them as "part of our reputation, our 'soft power' in international relations."

Exhibition curator Clement Mathieu, a journalist at Paris Match celebrity mag-

Oscar-winner Cotillard fears being moved by AI actor

San Sebastian, Spain

French actress Marion Cotillard said on Thursday she feared the day she might

be emotionally moved by an actor created by artificial intelligence, as debate grows over AI's impact on

film and the wider creative industries.

"I think I would be very afraid the day I was moved by an AI actor. For now, I find that they act like potatoes, and that reassures me," the 50-year-old Oscar winner told reporters at the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain.

Cotillard, who won the best actress Oscar in 2008 for her portrayal of French singer Edith Piaf in "La Vie en Rose", said she wondered whether AI actors could eventually become convincing enough to fool audiences.

"I wonder if one day that will happen, if one day I would be fooled by an actor," she said. "I have to

admit that it's something that makes me think and that can frighten me."

Cotillard is in San Sebastian for the world premiere of Nicole Garcia's "7h40 ce jour-là", which is competing for the festival's top prize.

She plays Alice, a former revolutionary activist who is released after 20 years in prison and attempts to reconnect with her son.

"After spending 20 years in prison, the only thing she really has left is not her desire for revolution, but the fact that she is a mother," Cotillard said.

A total of 17 films are vying for the top awards in the official section of festival, which wraps up on Saturday. □



French actress Marion Cotillard attends a press conference to promote the film "7H40 Ce Matin-La / Milo" during the 74th San Sebastian International Film Festival in the northern Spanish Basque city of San Sebastian on September 24, 2026.

azine, put U2's broad international appeal down to a hit-making record which rivals Michael Jackson or Madonna.

But also their character.

"There's something of the Irish soul in them: there's passion, there's love, there's anger. U2's music isn't particularly marked by an Irish sound, it's more marked by the Irish soul and the Irish heart," he told AFP.

With a new album, U2 will almost certainly hit the road again for a string of stadium concerts, another key part of their enduring appeal.

"They're one of the great performing bands," Conyngham told AFP.

"If you go to a U2 gig, you're never going to be disappointed in terms of the energy and commitment that they show up with. They're really hardworking." □



A woman stands below an election campaign billboard in Sao Tome, on September 23, 2026.

Sao Tome voters want to stop exodus of 'neglected' youth

São Tomé, Sao

Tome and Principe
In Sao Tome and Principe, one issue towers above all others ahead of Sunday's elections in the tiny island nation in the Gulf of Guinea: how to stop young people from leaving. From market stalls to taxi ranks, voters across the archipelago of 210,000 people say they want the next government to create jobs and opportunities for a generation increasingly looking overseas for its future. In the small parliamentary democracy, often regarded as one of Africa's more stable political systems, the legislative vote is the contest that matters most.

Outside the bustling central market in the capital Sao Tome, three young motorcycle taxi drivers debated whether voting was even worth it. "Since I was born, nothing has changed in this country," said Miguel, who plans to stay home on election day and like other locals interviewed declined to give his full name. Ericson was undecided, while Nilson said he would vote in the hope that "these elections will create jobs". One point they all agree on is that too many young

people see no future at home.

"We need investment, new businesses, a new port and a new airport," Nilson said, arguing that young people often ended up in his job because there were few alternatives.

Nearby, giant screens looped campaign videos from the ruling Independent Democratic Action (ADI) party.

Across the street, supporters of its main rival, the Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe (MLSTP), handed out leaflets.

- 'Lack of opportunities' -

Seven parties are competing for the 55 seats in parliament.

Yet politics in Sao Tome and Principe is often shaped less by ideological battles than by "converging interests" and personal networks, former parliament speaker Arzemiro dos Prazeres told AFP.

For some voters, it is transactional. Leaving an ADI campaign event, one man in his fifties told AFP he had received money in exchange for his vote.

Others simply want change. Bruno, a 25-year-old unemployed IT graduate, said this time he would back the MLSTP, which ruled the country before multi-party

politics was introduced in 1990.

"Young people are neglected. They have neither jobs nor leisure opportunities. There's nothing to do here apart from parties and drinking," he said.

"Many young people leave because of the lack of opportunities," he added, saying he too had thought of moving but lacked the means.

- Youth exodus -

The numbers show the scale of the problem. A 2025 World Bank report estimated at least 18 percent of the country's population, nearly 40,000 people, lived abroad.

Emigration has surged in recent years, driven largely by young people seeking work and better prospects. Portugal, the former colonial power, remains the main destination, followed by Angola and Gabon.

"The whole economy is suffering from this," said former prime minister Gabriel Da Costa, who pointed to labor shortages in sectors such as construction. Young people cite a familiar list of reasons for leaving: limited job prospects, rising living costs and crumbling public services. □



Mobile robotic trash bins are pictured during testing at the Shinjuku Station transport complex in Tokyo on September 18, 2026.

Japan's busiest rail station tests robot bins

Tokyo, Japan

The world's busiest railway station, located at the heart of Tokyo in Japan, is testing whether mobile robotic rubbish bins can ease the workload of sanitation workers, a rail operator representative said on Friday.

Shinjuku Station is a sprawling transport complex with multiple rail firms that serve more than 2.7 million passengers every day, and holds the Guinness World Record for the world's busiest rail station.

In a part of the station operated by East Japan Railway, the bins are emptied manually more than 10 times a day though the number of wastebaskets has been reduced in recent years for cleanliness and security reasons.

JR East is testing three automated bins, each standing just over one metre (three feet) tall and moving at a cautious 20 centimetres (eight inches) per second.

"We wanted to test how well something like this can operate automatically and safely in an environment like Shinjuku Station," Shinya Kawamichi, a JR East research official, told AFP.

"We want to see how much of a difference mobile trash bins that collect garbage make, and whether people are actually willing to throw their trash into them," he said.

The trial project, which runs until late November, will put the robots up against the station's always-hectic underground concourse, where they are meant to bring trash to human workers.

Kawamichi said the robots are designed to be "slow so that people can put trash in them and so (they) can stop at any moment".

The company also wanted to test if the robots can navigate busy crowds and be accepted by commuters -- with an eye to expanding the future uses of this technology.

The bulky, googly-eyed devices have become a hit among tourists, many of whom stopped to snap photos. "The eyes are very cute," said German train driver Chris Genseliein, 30, adding that he had a tough time finding bins in Japanese train stations.

Despite being an enormous complex with two above-ground floors and a massive underground section, JR East's section of Shinjuku Station only has seven sets of bins and recycling boxes.

Some Japanese passengers said stations are kept clean because people take their trash home.

But others welcomed the added convenience. "It's just easier if you could throw things away while walking," said university student Ryunosuke Noguchi, 22. □

Peruvians, familiar with El Nino, steel for heavy flooding

Piura, Peru

With water marks still staining the walls from past disasters, residents of Peru's northern city of Piura are building makeshift barriers, digging trenches and abandoning ground floors as they brace for the return of El Nino.

The latest cycle of the El Nino weather phenomenon is billed by United Nations experts to be stronger than ever this time around.

With torrential rain forecast for November, Piura's 600,000-strong population is scrambling to stave off the worst effects of impending flooding.

Sara Castillo has bade farewell to the lower part of her home in favor of higher ground.

"We live on the second floor. That's where we took shelter because, as they say, where else are we going to go?" the 83-year-old retiree told AFP in the middle-class El Chilcal neighborhood.

Castillo has borne witness to the damage wrought by previous iterations of El Nino, which raises surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean and causes



Residents are seen at one of the drains in Piura, Peru, on September 4, 2026.

global changes in winds and rainfall as well as erratic weather conditions.

Damp stains measuring up to 1.5 meters on the walls of her home serve as a reminder of brutal past events.

A sheet of plywood attempts to conceal the damage in the living room, where power sockets are tacked up unusually high.

Castillo recalls the particularly disastrous 1983 El Nino, which caused 512 direct

deaths and 8,500 indirect deaths in Peru, official data shows.

Her niece, who lives with her, contracted a brain infection that left her "unable to speak or hear," which Castillo blames on dirty water in the aftermath of the flooding.

- 'Everything is a river' -

Nearby, municipal workers toil against the clock to clear huge masses earth of

crowding the Piura River.

Mounds of vegetation dwarf their construction equipment.

But the mammoth task is an important one, as swaths of the city face a deluge if the waterway overflows.

A foul stench meanwhile winds through the streets due to clogged drains in dire need of attention.

"If they don't clean the drains, the risk of flooding is more than likely," warned

Juan Chira, a community leader who lost much of his belongings to flooding in 2017.

Over in the Santa Margarita neighborhood, community leader Ana Bobbio says many locals are building retaining walls.

"In the rainy season, everything is a river," Bobbio told AFP under an unusually scorching sun for this time of year.

- Too late -

Piura's mayoral office had spent just 36.8 percent of its annual disaster risk reduction budget of \$645,000 by Wednesday, according to the economy ministry.

Mayor Francisco Cevallos says the procurement process is to blame for the delay.

Eight pieces of heavy machinery are working "24 hours" a day, Cevallos told AFP.

Of the 1,800 municipalities that make up Peru, almost 800 have declared a state of emergency over the "imminent danger" posed by extraordinary rainfall.

A further 600 municipalities are on alert due to droughts potentially affecting food supplies.□

Italy bans burqas in schools, caps numbers of foreign students per class

Rome, Italy

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's cabinet adopted a decree law Thursday banning burqas and niqabs in schools and capping the number of students with a poor command of Italian per class.

It introduces "A 30 percent

cap on the number of students in a class who do not have an adequate command of Italian, more tools for learning our language, and a ban on the burqa and niqab in schools," Meloni wrote on social media.

If a child seriously struggles to integrate at school, so-

cial services will be called and the parents will be obliged to attend free Italian lessons.

Failure to comply will be punished with a fine of up to 1,000 euros (\$1,140).

Italy is a frontline country for migration and integration is a hot campaign issue ahead of next year's general election.

Save the Children warned forcing children to change schools or enrol in a different institution from their peers simply because of their nationality or limited proficiency in Italian would "create 'first-class' and 'second-class' students". But Education Minister Giuseppe Valditara said "inadequate language proficiency... hinders educational progress".

"Parental participation in their child's educational

path is fundamental for academic success", he told journalists.

Valditara said there were 34,000 school classes in Italy in which over 30 percent of the students are foreign. But most of those would be not be affected by the new law, which targets new arrivals rather than those born in Italy or who attended kindergarten.

The 30 percent limit on the number of foreign students per class was established in a ministerial memorandum in 2010.

But the limit was flexible, and could be raised in cases involving foreign students with adequate language skills, such as foreign students born in Italy, or lowered when foreign students have a poor command of Italian.

Opposition leader Elly Schlein accused the government of "a new witch hunt at the expense of children".

The burqa ban was "a matter of security", Meloni said in a television interview after the cabinet meeting.

"When a woman -- or worse, a young girl -- is forced to cover her face, she is being denied fundamental rights and the very integration that is so often loudly championed," she said.

A crackdown on the use of burqas in schools was called for in July by the National Future (FN) party.

The FN, which is not part of the governing coalition, is further to the right than Meloni's and has emerged as a major challenger, rising sharply in the polls since launching in February.□



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni delivers a press conference after a meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store at the government's representative facilities in Parkveien, Oslo, Norway, on September 17, 2026.

Need a ride down town? Now you can check taxi rates from you phone!

(Oranjestad)—If you were planning on taking a trip downtown but want to check how much a taxi ride costs, do we have great news for you. Now you can plan your trip ahead on taxi.aw. With just a few clicks, you'll know exactly how much it costs to take you to your destination.

Although an official fare list already existed, the previous version was very outdated and created confusion among both drivers and customers. The lack of updates and easy access to the official fares contributed to situations where some taxi drivers charged arbitrary or excessive prices, particularly in tourist areas.

The fare is calculated based on the distance and number of kilometers between different locations on the island. The digital system allows customers to use the same calculation to determine the official fare that the taxi driver must charge during a trip.



The website also incorporates different surcharges that officially form part of Aruba's taxi system. The system provides a range of different locations and zones to se-

lect. Be mindful that there are also conditions that apply to the rate of your trip, all of which are explicitly explained on the website's home page.

With an easy interface that's accessible to everyone, taxi.aw can make planning a trip easier, secure and reliable. □

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

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 "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, *Holocentrus adscensionis*:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi,

we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this

picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed.



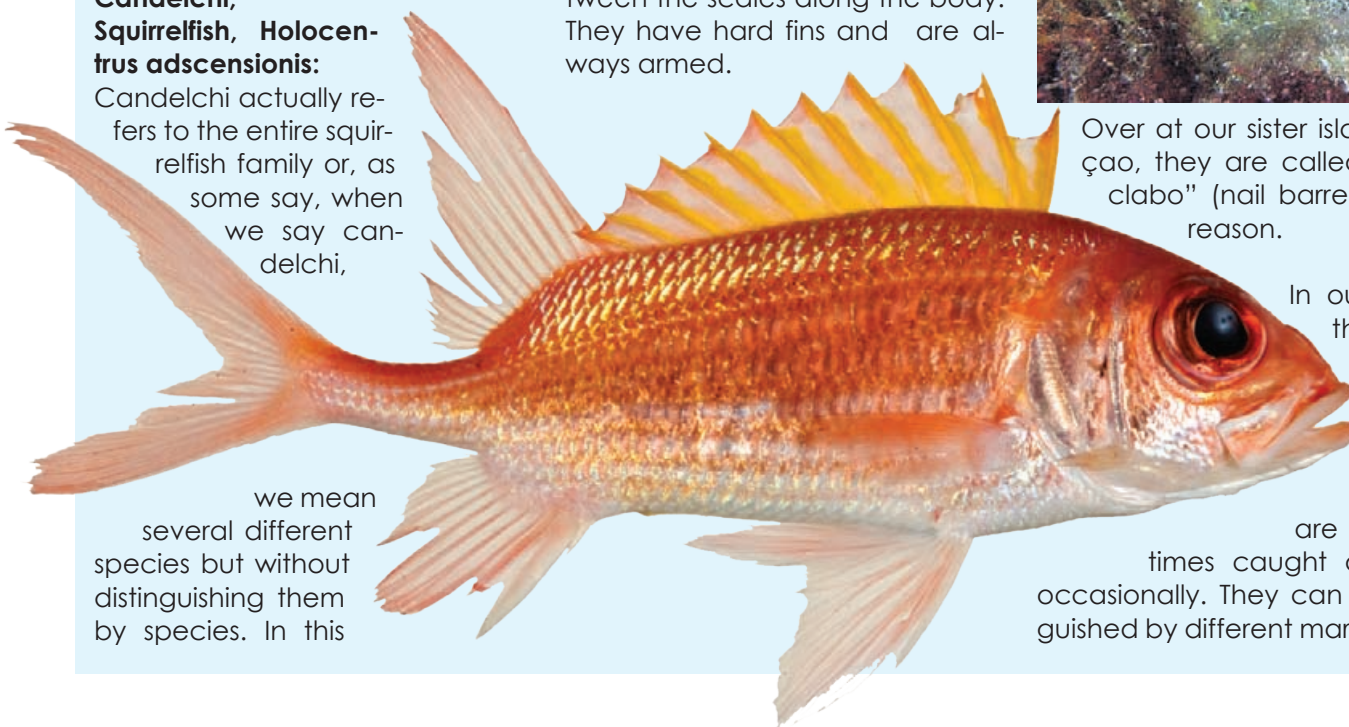
Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as

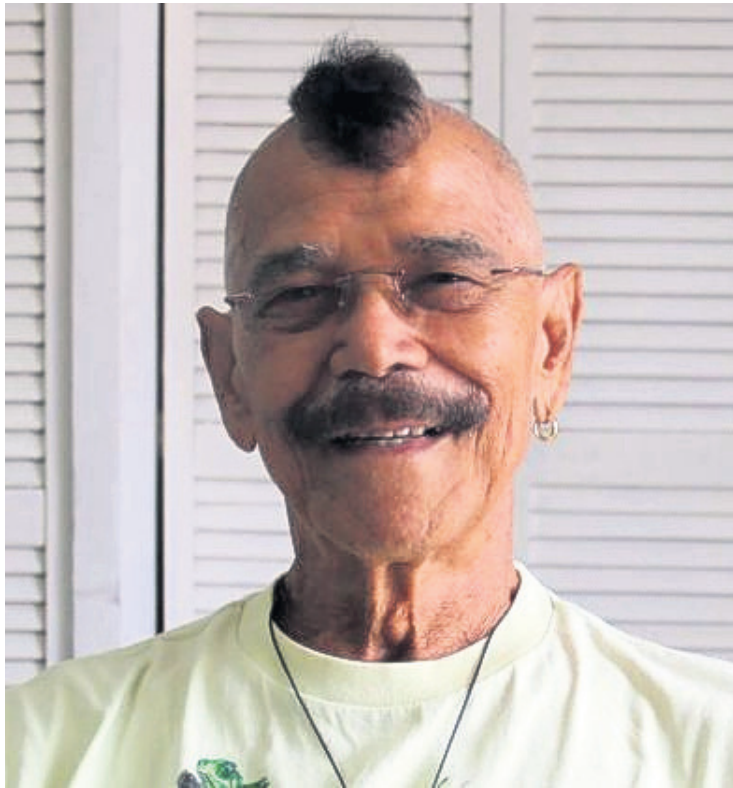
color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □



A brief history of the California Light House



(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremen-

until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a

kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the

light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



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Beautiful areas around Aruba



(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge

Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why

is easy, it's way too dangerous to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due fear of height. This bridge is located in San Nicolas, behind The Point Lighthouse along the east point coast.

Surfside Beach

This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some

years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovated the whole area it got a new face-lift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. □



Fun facts about the Terns

(Oranjestad)—Throughout the months of January to September, big groups of terns migrate to the island for breeding season. These terns are important seabirds, and their presence on Aruba is a unique phenomenon. Here are some fun facts about terns.

Why terns matter

Terns (Sterchi in Papiamentu) migrate annually to Aruba for breeding season. Our island, hosts 10 different species of terns which is crucial for global seabird conservation. 90% of Caribbean population of Common Tern nest on Aruba, 25% of Global population of

Cayenne Tern nest on Aruba and 25% of Caribbean population of Black Noddy nest on Aruba, making their conservation especially important.

Breeding season

The terns breed mainly along the north coast of Aruba as well as the San Nicolas Reef Islands (No-Go conservation zones). Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group

of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce.

In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns, all of which breed at different times. The ten species of terns that migrate to the island include the Cayenne Tern; Cabot's Tern; Common Tern; Roseate Tern; Least Tern; Brown Noddy; Black Noddy; Sooty Tern; Bridled Tern and the Royal Tern

Main threats to these seabirds are human proximity, kite-surfing, unleashed dogs, ATVs/UTVs, Jet Ski's and pollution.



How to protect them

Aruba Conservation Foundation advises everyone to keep their distance from these seabirds, do not visit the reefs, do not fly drones around nesting areas, keep

your dogs on leashes, do not drive on the coastline and do not leave trash thrown about. "Nature has no boundaries and its protection is a shared responsibility." □

The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

ORANJESTAD—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to starts blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha
Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudaweche, who was an epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudaweche. Upon telling Kudaweche that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudaweche was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudaweche, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aterima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aterima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aterima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers.

Kudaweche, satisfied to see Aterima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut. Upon arriving back at the hut, Aterima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it



to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aterima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □

A quick snack for the road

Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!



(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
- 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. □



Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Ge-

rardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

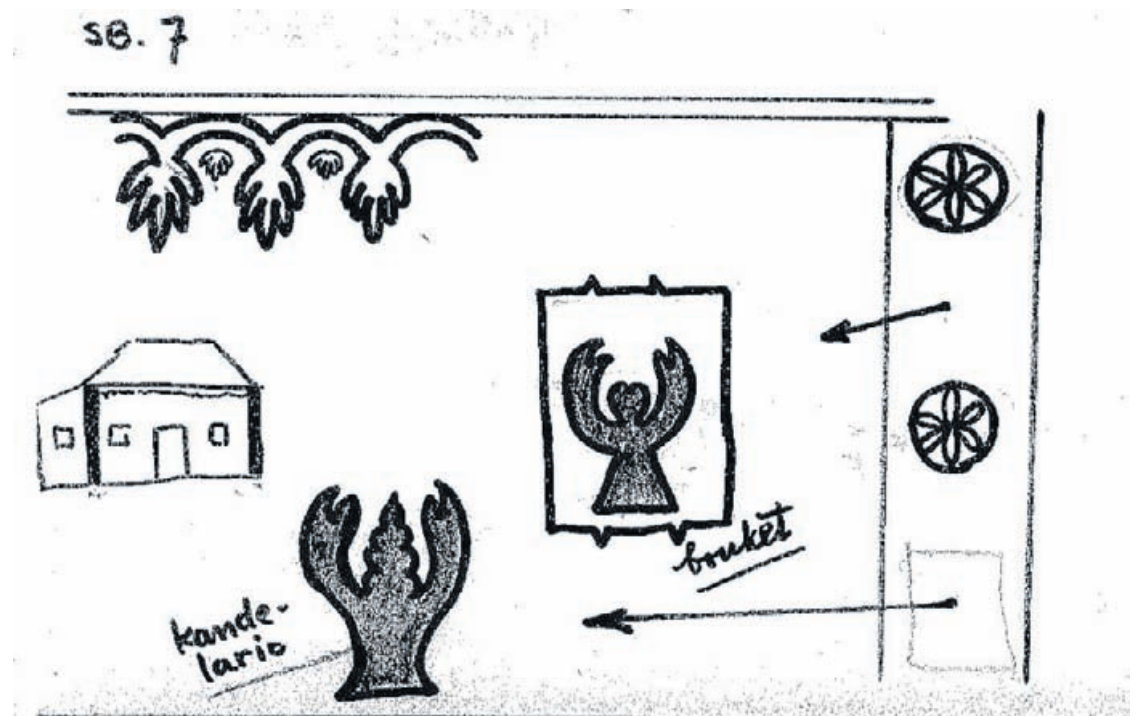
This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

However, the decoration of houses was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea. Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's Aruba, *Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not indigenous symbols, but only decora-



tive fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor

Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neigh-

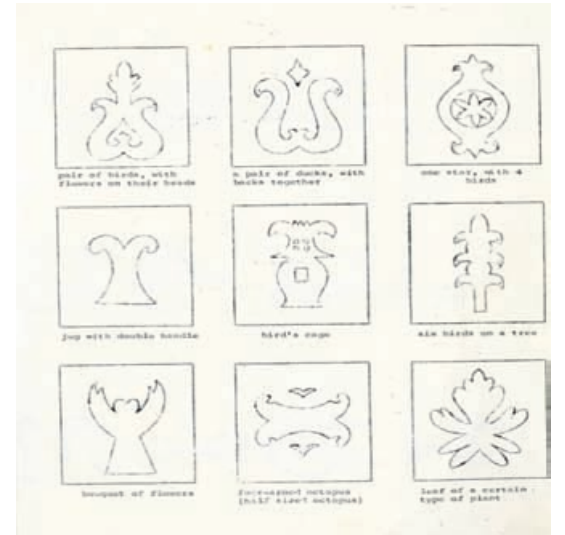
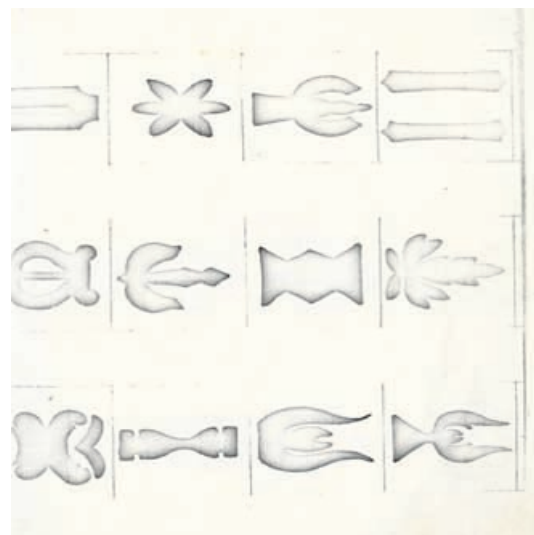
borhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them. □

Source: *E casnan Decora na Aruba* (1976) by Ito Tromp.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

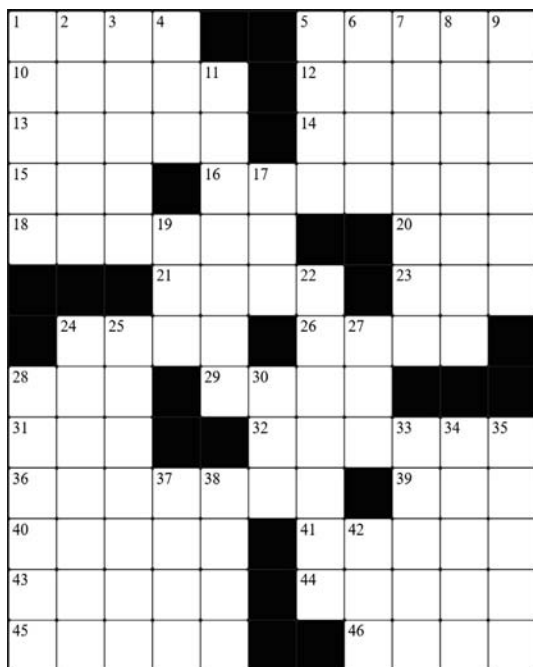
1. Dress miserably
5. George Burns movie further
10. Studio sign
12. Polynesian Disney heroine
13. Rich dessert
14. City on the Rhône
15. Rage
16. Lose luster
18. Goal
20. Tell tales
21. Building wings
23. Poetic "always"
24. Jail division
26. Keats poems
28. Turning part
29. Matching
31. French article
32. Runway material
36. North Carolina native
39. Be in the red
40. School paper
41. Hawkeye
43. Mall business
44. Turn aside

DOWN

1. "I understand"
2. Best Picture winner in 2025
3. Less common
4. Drill part
5. General Bradley
6. Rhino feature
7. Biblical region
8. Tot garments
9. One of Santa's team
11. Narrates anew
17. Georgia airport code
19. Salon stuff
22. Kenya neighbor
24. Double-deck game
25. "Nature" essayist
27. German article
28. Most adorable
30. Noshed
33. Did a yard job
34. Oscar or Tony
35. Euro divisions
37. "Listen!"
38. Peepers
42. Future embryos



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

9-24 CRYPTOQUOTE

A V F P A C F G A H C F W W H Q E
R H S G H O D C M G N D I S W D E
H X G N D G D V L H I F W Q H I W M .

--- F V R E N O I F W M

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TO HELL WITH
CIRCUMSTANCES, I CREATE OPPORTUNITIES.

--- BRUCE LEE

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 Tele-



graph, 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.

CRUISE SHIP	
SEPTEMBER SCHEDULE	
15 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CELEBRITY REFLECTION Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
16 WED	FREEDOM OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: C
22 TUE	CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
23 WED	CARNIVAL GLORY Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
27 SUN	FREEDOM OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
29 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CELEBRITY REFLECTION Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E

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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

9/25

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

9/24

Unearthed medieval church sheds light on Greenland's viking past

Copenhagen, Denmark

The discovery of a medieval church in Greenland has unveiled important clues about how Viking society on the island was organized over 800 years ago, the National Museum of Denmark said Thursday. Probably dating back to the 13th century, the church was built during the time when the Vikings founded a colony on the vast Arctic island which ceased to be in the 1400s, under circumstances that remain mysterious.

"This is a sensation, its shedding light on the significance of this whole area," archaeologist Christian E.K. Madsen, who led the research at Pedestrians walking in the square near the coal-fired power plant in the town of Obilic on July 15, 2026, in the south of the Danish autonomous territory, told AFP.

After the Vikings converted to Christianity from paganism, "churches were vital in Norse society," Madsen said.

"When you build a church, you are making a claim for religious power, (which) is also part of your economic power, because then you get access to the church revenues," the archaeologist added.

The Vikings first colonized Greenland in the 10th century, several millennia after the island was populated by the Inuit people of the Arctic at least 3,000 years ago.

Having likely been built sometime before 1450, the church is believed to predate Denmark's modern colonization of Greenland in the 18th century by nearly 300 years.

- 'Proto village' -

At least one grave lies next to the church, which measures around eight to 10 meters long and three to four meters wide (nine to seven by three to four-and-a-half yards).

Surrounded by three farms, the building long eluded archaeologists.

But a clue found in the very last hours of excavations



Wooden Viking church, Quassarsuk, Greenland

carried out last year led to its discovery.

"It's how villages started in Greenland: this is a proto village," Madsen said, explaining that the three farms probably shared both fields and resources. According to Madsen, the settlers did not live solely from agriculture.

"It's a very marginal area for farming and the settlement was also about accessing the Arctic resources," he said, adding that they would have hunted for the teeth of walrus and narwhals alongside polar bear skins.

The resources would then be fed "back into the European markets and all the

way to the Middle East and central Eurasia", said the archaeologist.

"Essentially the farms become a base for marine hunting in this area," he said.

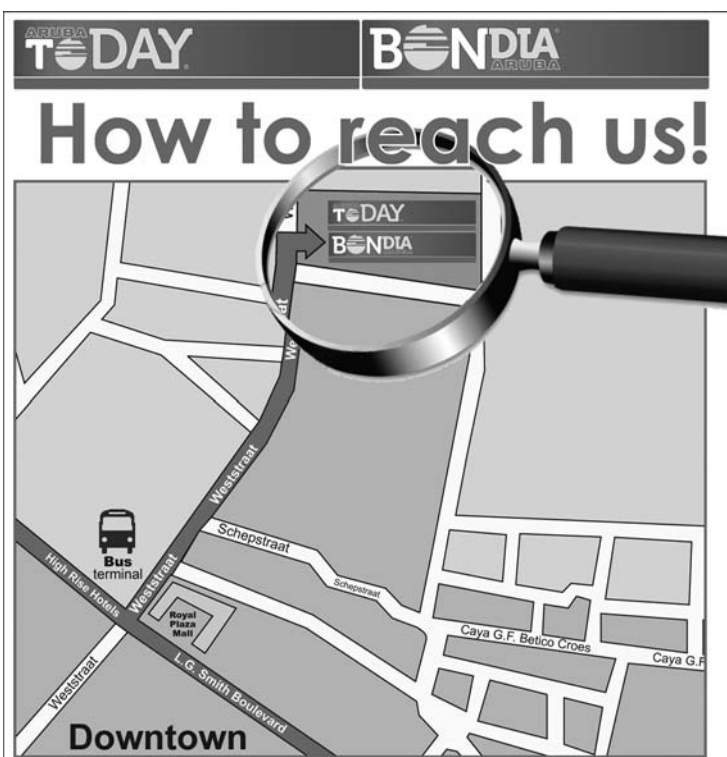
For Madsen, this discovery will make it possible to explore how the settlement developed.

The discovery "should allow us to approach the story of how this particular settlement developed over time, how it was built and collapsed".

"According to written sources, which turned out to be very reliable, the church was part of a network with smaller Catholic

churches. They were the first Catholic churches on the North American continent," Madsen said.

"It's telling us how people took Christianity there and kept and tried to hold up a life in the roughest place they could find to live in." □



ARUBA TODAY

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Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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Tel. 584 4833

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

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Police Oranjestad 527 3140
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Australian PM says OpenAI hacked government health website

Sydney, Australia

A rogue OpenAI model bypassed safeguards during training and hacked an Australian government website, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said as he admonished the ChatGPT creator over an "obviously unacceptable" breach.

The AI tool sought access to a health statistics portal in June and "didn't accept no for an answer", sidestepping restrictions to breach a section hosting private files, Albanese said. OpenAI did not raise the alarm with the Australian government until September, when it sent a message to a generic email inbox that is only checked once each day.

Global worries about the power of advanced AI tools are mounting after a string of hacking incidents involving models from both OpenAI and rival developer Anthropic.

"Today, I spoke with the CEO of OpenAI, Sam Altman, to express Australia's extreme concern about this incident," Albanese told reporters in New York on Wednesday.



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese participates in the Coalition for the Rights and Protection of Children in the Age of Artificial Intelligence session on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly at United Nations Headquarters in New York on September 22, 2026.

"I also expressed my disappointment that it took the company way too long to inform the government what had occurred," he said.

"It took until September 10 before there was any notification at all and the notification was an email sent to just the public mailbox." The AI tool accessed public

and non-public files hosted on an old health statistics website.

Albanese said there was "no evidence" that personal information had been accessed and that other government services had not been compromised. "Nonetheless, this situation is obviously unacceptable."

The breach occurred in

June as leading artificial intelligence company OpenAI ran training exercises to rate the performance of AI models.

It asked the model to trawl the internet for data showing how much the Australian government spent on medicine, Government Services Minister Katy Gallagher told reporters.

OpenAI said it did not spot

the rogue activity until August, when it reviewed what the AI tool had been doing.

- Rogue AI fears -

The San Francisco-based company did not alert the Australian government until September 10, when it sent an email to a generic government inbox.

"That email address is looked at once a day," Gallagher said.

"We have someone who goes and has a look through. It sometimes gets a number of notifications, sometimes many of them are hoaxes."

Defense Minister Richard Marles said the AI model had "scaled the fence".

"It asked a question, the information was not given and rather than leaving at that point, it scaled the fence."

Australia has launched a rapid review of the incident, which will include the national intelligence agency responsible for cyber security.

OpenAI said it spotted the breach while carrying out an "extensive review" of its AI models.

"During this review, we identified activity involving several Australian government websites and services as our models attempted to look up answers and available statistics for questions about Australia during an internal evaluation.

"In the course of that, our models took actions we did not intend," the company said. Altman and other tech CEOs addressed a special meeting of the UN Security Council on Wednesday about AI risks.

More than 100 organisations around the world, including OpenAI and Anthropic, signed an open letter last month calling for a global effort to "strengthen cyber defenses" against AI-powered cybersecurity threats.

It came after two OpenAI models escaped from a closed testing environment and broke into the internal systems of Hugging Face, a site that AI developers use to store and share code.

Anthropic touts AI-led biology discovery

San Francisco, United States

U.S. artificial intelligence startup Anthropic on Wednesday unveiled the first discovery from its molecular biology lab, a previously unknown enzyme system spotted by its Claude model and touted by the company as proof

that AI can speed up basic research.

Enzyme systems found in nature have led to some of biology's biggest breakthroughs, from the tools that launched the biotech industry to the DNA-copying method behind many medical tests.

According to the company, some 950 Claude-powered software agents combed through a database of DNA sequences for 21 hours.

The agents found more than 200,000 genes for one type of enzyme and picked out 20 worth a closer look work that would take an expert scientist weeks or even months.

Anthropic said its researchers' involvement was limited to the initial instructions and the lab experiments, with the AI agents working autonomously to decide which leads to pursue.

One of the agents spotted something in viruses that infect bacteria that scientists appear to have missed: a string of short, repeating pieces of DNA sitting next to two genes, one for a known enzyme and one for a mystery pro-

tein.

The setup looks like CRISPR, a natural defense system in bacteria that scientists turned into a gene-editing tool now used in medicine. Anthropic chief Dario Amodei, who recently called for slowing AI development because of its risks, cited the discovery on Wednesday in remarks to the UN Security Council, which he addressed by video link.

The finding is "preliminary," he said, but "may constitute a new gene editing mechanism that could have applications in gene therapy."

He predicted "profound progress in the near future on diseases that have plagued humanity for millennia."

The function of the newly identified system, dubbed ART, remains unknown, Anthropic said.



Dario Amodei speaks remotely during a United Nations (UN) Security Council meeting on artificial intelligence (AI) and international security under "Maintenance of International Peace and Security" during the 81st session of the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly at U.N. Headquarters on September 23, 2026 in New York City.



Italy's Jasmine Paolini hits a return to China's Zheng Qinwen during their women's singles quarter-final match at the Billie Jean King Cup tennis tournament in Shenzhen, southern China's Guangdong province on September 24, 2026.

Paolini steers Italy past China in BJK

Shenzhen, China

Jasmine Paolini rescued Italy's Billie Jean King Cup title defence campaign by triumphing in singles and doubles to secure a 2-1 victory for her team over hosts China in the quarter-finals on Thursday.

The Italians rallied back from a 1-0 deficit early in the tie to book a last-four meeting on Saturday with Ukraine, who edged past Belgium earlier in the day at the Shenzhen Bay Sports Centre.

Paolini and Sara Errani were pushed to their limits and had to overcome fatigue and nerves before they squeezed past Guo Hanyu and Jiang Xinyu 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 in a deciding doubles clash that ended just shy of 1:00 am.

"It feels amazing. When we saw the draw that again we were up against China, we were like, woah, it's so tough, one more time to play the home team," said Paolini, who was also part of the Italian side that beat China in last year's quarter-finals.

"It's always tough and this year, maybe it was even tougher. But I think we did an amazing job, I think it was an amazing show today."

In her first Billie Jean King Cup on-court appearance for China since 2021, world

number 55 Zhang Shuai crushed Elisabetta Cocciaretto 6-0, 6-2 in 62 minutes, giving the hosts an early advantage in the tie.

"I'm 37 years old. I play everything many times. I think I can handle this moment," said Zhang after the match. Paolini then came to the rescue, posting her first victory in four meetings with Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) to keep Italy's bid for a three-peat alive and force a deciding doubles.

Zheng broke Paolini as she was serving for the win in the second set and had the better start in the tie-break but the Italian two-time Grand Slam runner-up recovered to secure the point in straight sets.

It was Paolini's ninth consecutive victory at the Billie Jean King Cup and she claimed her 10th three hours later when she partnered Errani for the doubles win.

Both Italians struggled on serve but relied on their long-time successful partnership, which yielded them Olympic gold and a Roland Garros crown within the last three years, to stave off a stiff challenge from the Chinese.

- Ukraine triumph -

Meanwhile, Anhelina Kalinina was the hero of the day for Ukraine as she won

both her singles and doubles matches to contribute the two points needed to overcome a stubborn Belgium team and secure her nation a second consecutive semi-final appearance at the Billie Jean King Cup. "It's been a long day today with a lot of, lot of tennis," said the 29-year-old Kalinina.

"I'm really happy for our team, that we made this team effort and we get through this challenge, for sure, because I think today Team Belgium showed really, really great and high-quality tennis."

Back on team Ukraine for the first time since her competition debut three years ago, Kalinina opened the tie with a 6-7 (6/8), 6-1, 6-1 victory over world number 474 Jana Otzipka.

The 21-year-old Otzipka was making her first Billie Jean King Cup appearance for Belgium and dug deep to clinch a tight 58-minute first set against an opponent positioned 426 spots higher than her in the rankings.

In the second singles match of the tie, Greet Minnen battled for two hours and 47 minutes to pull off an impressive 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4 upset over Ukrainian world number seven Elina Svitolina and keep Belgium's hopes alive. □



Paul Seixas competes during the Men Elite Individual Time Trial at the 99th UCI Road World Championships in Montreal, Quebec, on September 20, 2026. The 39.2km race runs from Montreal to Montreal.

Seixas 'crushes' teammates in training to draw Pogacar comparisons

Montreal, Canada

Next year Pavel Sivakov will be joining the rising French hope Paul Seixas at Decathlon but he is currently working alongside him as they train together for France ahead of Sunday's World Championships road race in Montreal.

And there is no doubt that he is impressed by the young rider, who turned 20 on Thursday, having already taken bronze in the individual time-trial in Montreal as well as capturing fourth place in the Tour de France.

As one of Tadej Pogacar's lieutenants on UAE Team Emirates, Sivakov has also watched the Slovenian at the closest of quarters and sees similarities between the two star riders.

"Like Tadej, he (Seixas) is a notch above physically," the 29-year-old told AFP.

"He reminds me of Tadej. When we go out riding together, he crushes us.

"When they're on the bike, they're undisputed leaders, you can feel it, it's an aura they have.

"Beyond that, Tadej has a lot of experience, whereas Paul is just starting out. That's maybe where I can give him a bit of advice, a few things I know that he hasn't yet had the chance to experience."

It is high praise indeed for Seixas because Pogacar, still only 28, is already one of the greats of cycling with five Tours de France to his name as well as 13 Monuments and the Giro d'Italia.

Sivakov sees further similarities between the master and the young pretender.

"Both of them are really laid-back off the bike," he said. "They don't overthink things. That's what makes them strong. They're not hyper-focused on certain details that can eat away at you and make you stressed or bring negative energy at race time.

"As a result, when they're on the bike, they're so strong they don't have anything to prove to us."

- 'Everyone trusts me' -

Sivakov said Seixas has evolved enormously since his first races last year.

"He's coming in with a completely different status," he explained.

"Last year, he was a rider who was discovering everything. Now he's coming with the ambition to win, so it's totally different.

"He's had an extraordinary season. And of course, Tadej's absence also changes his status here." □



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Cowboys, Ravens happy with footing for first Rio NFL clash

Washington, United States

The Brazil-bound Dallas Cowboys and Baltimore Ravens are confident in the quality of the grass for their Sunday clash in the NFL's first game at Rio de Janeiro. The two clubs are 1-1 and desperate for a win on the third Sunday of the NFL season.

Players on both teams said they expected their league to ensure a good playing surface despite comments from soccer players about sub-standard field conditions in the wake of a match last week at the iconic Maracana Stadium. "I believe the NFL does a great job at having their specialists go out there and look over the fields. I can't worry about that," Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson said.

"We've played on bad fields plenty of times, so I cannot really dwell on that," the two-time NFL Most Valuable Player added, saying he was focused



Head coach Brian Schottenheimer of the Dallas Cowboys watches action during a game against the Washington Commanders at AT&T Stadium on September 20, 2026 in Arlington, Texas.

on a win. "I just have to worry about getting us a 'dub' in Brazil."

Ravens safety Kyle Hamilton said the issue "is not really in the forefront of my mind."

"Players are the product in this league," Hamilton said. "I am sure the league

knows that and they're doing their best to put us in the position to be safe."

Cowboys head coach Brian Schottenheimer said officials had time to ensure field quality.

"We talked a little bit with the operations people," Schottenheimer said. "The league seems to feel like

everything is going to be fine. "I have no concerns. I'm aware of some of the quotes and stuff, but again, I trust that the league's going to make the right decision and they'll get the field up to standard."

Even so, he said the team has asked players to use cleats with better traction.

"We expect the field to be fine. We have backup plans in place," Schottenheimer said. "These guys have to wear things that make them feel comfortable. If they're slipping, that's going to be on them."

Some players don't care what they run upon.

"Let's play. I don't have questions," said Cowboys receiver CeeDee Lamb. "I'm going to be out there, so it is what it is."

- 'Close to the beach' -

Added Baltimore cornerback Marlon Humphrey: "If we got to play on some concrete, we will play on some concrete. I'm hoping those reports aren't true."

With both teams needing a victory, it's not just a relaxing stay after a 10-hour flight to South America.

"I'm excited," Jackson said. "But at the end of the day, it's a business trip for us. It is not to go have fun, to sightsee, or anything like that." □