

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history



Page 8



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What Americans think about Hegseth, Gabbard and key Trump Cabinet picks AP-NORC poll

By LINLEY SANDERS and
MEG KINNARD

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As several of President-elect Donald Trump's choices for high-level positions in his incoming administration face scrutiny on Capitol Hill, a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that Americans have their own doubts.

Relatively few Americans overall approve of Pete Hegseth, Trump's choice to lead the Department of Defense, or Tulsi Gabbard, his pick for intelligence chief, although a substantial share doesn't know who those figures are. The other selections who were included in the poll, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for health secretary and Marco Rubio for secretary of state, are more well-known but not much more popular among Americans overall. Trump and his allies are pushing Republican senators to confirm his picks, who are meeting with lawmakers before Trump returns to the



Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump's nominee to be Defense Secretary, gives a thumbs-up as he walks with his wife Jennifer Rauchet, left, to meet with Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, at the Capitol in Washington, Monday, Dec. 9, 2024.

Associated Press

White House next month. Given the Republicans' slim majority in the Senate, the stakes are high for each Trump pick.

Only about 2 in 10 Americans approve of Hegseth's nomination

An Army veteran and former Fox News commentator, Hegseth has been trying to make his case amid allegations of excessive drink-

ing and the revelation that he made a settlement payment after being accused of a sexual assault that he denies. Trump has reiterated his support for Hegseth, who appears to have won over some of the senators who were once critical of his selection.

Hegseth is still an unknown quantity for many Americans. About 4 in 10 don't

know enough about him to give an opinion, according to the poll. But his selection is viewed more negatively than positively among Americans who do know who he is. About 2 in 10 U.S. adults approve of Hegseth being picked for Trump's Cabinet, while 36% disapprove and about 1 in 10 don't know enough to have an opinion. He has higher support among Republicans, but it's not overwhelming. Many Republicans do not have an opinion of Hegseth: About 4 in 10 say they don't know enough about him. About one-third of Republicans approve of him as a pick, and 16% disapprove. Another 1 in 10 Republicans, roughly, are neutral and say they neither approve nor disapprove. Those approval numbers among Republicans are at least slightly lower for Hegseth than any of the other names included in the poll. Approval of Gabbard's nomination is also low. Gabbard, who represented Hawaii in the House for four

terms as a Democrat, sought the 2020 presidential nomination before leaving her party. She was one of Trump's most sought-after surrogates in the 2024 campaign. Gabbard has faced new questions about her proximity to Syria amid the sudden end of Syrian President Bashar Assad's long hold on power. Gabbard is as unknown as Hegseth is, but Americans are a little less likely to disapprove of her nomination. About 2 in 10 Americans approve of Trump's pick of Gabbard, while about 3 in 10 disapprove. The rest either do not know enough to say — about 4 in 10 said this — or have a neutral view.

Approval is slightly higher among Republicans than Hegseth's, though. About 4 in 10 Republicans approve of the choice, while very few disapprove and 16% have a neutral view. Similar to Americans overall, about 4 in 10 Republicans don't know enough to say. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is better known — and less well-liked. □

Meta donates \$1 million to Trump's inauguration fund



Mark Zuckerberg talks about the Orion AR glasses during the Meta Connect conference on Sept. 25, 2024, in Menlo Park, Calif.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, said it has donated \$1 million to President-elect Donald

Trump's inauguration fund. The donation comes just weeks after Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg met with Trump privately at Mar-a-Lago. A

Meta spokesperson confirmed the offering Thursday. The news was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. Stephen Miller, who has been appointed deputy chief of staff for Trump's second term, has said that Zuckerberg, like other business leaders, wants to support Trump's economic plans. The tech CEO has been seeking to change his company's perception on the right following a rocky relationship with Trump.

Trump was kicked off Facebook following the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol. The company restored his account in early 2023. During the 2024 campaign,

Zuckerberg did not endorse a candidate for president but has voiced a more positive stance toward Trump. Earlier this year, he praised Trump's response to his first assassination attempt. Still, Trump had continued to attack Zuckerberg publicly during the campaign. In July, he posted a message on his own social network Truth Social threatening to send election fraudsters to prison in part by citing a nickname he used for the Meta CEO. "ZUCKERBUCKS, be careful!" Trump wrote. Corporations have traditionally made up a large share of donors to presidential inaugurations, with an

exception in 2009, when then-President-elect Barack Obama refused to accept corporate donations. He reversed course for his second inaugural in 2013.

Facebook did not donate to either Biden's 2021 inaugural or Trump's 2017 inaugural. Google donated \$285,000 each to Trump first inaugural and Biden's inaugural, according to Federal Election Commission records. Inaugural committees are required to disclose the source of their fundraising, but not how they spend the money. Microsoft gave \$1 million to Obama's second inaugural, but only \$500,000 to Trump in 2017 and Biden in 2021. □

Military service academies see drop in reported sexual assaults after alarming surge

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reported sexual assaults at the U.S. military service academies dropped in 2024 for the second year in a row, according to new Pentagon data, marking a sharp turnaround from an alarming surge two years ago that triggered sweeping reviews and an overhaul in leadership.

The decline in reports was mirrored by a similar decrease in the total number of students who said in an anonymous survey that they experienced some type of unwanted sexual contact during the school year that ended in the spring. Defense officials, however, warned on Thursday that the numbers are still high, and there is still a lot of work to be done.

According to the survey, which is done every other year, about 13% of female students said they experienced unwanted sexual contact in the 2024 school year, compared with more than 21% in 2022. For men, the rate decreased from



An entrance to the U.S. Naval Academy campus in Annapolis, Md., is seen Jan. 9, 2014.

Associated Press

4.4% to 3.6%.

The reported assaults reflect familiar trends. Most of the alleged offenders are also academy students and are often known to the victim. They often happen after duty hours or on weekends and holidays. Drinking has long been a consistent factor.

Beth Foster, executive director of the Pentagon's force resiliency office, called the new numbers encouraging. But she added, "the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment is still far too high. What this data tells us is that this is a difficult problem for all, but it is not an impossible prob-

lem to solve."

A vast majority of students 88% responded to the survey. Defense officials said they are still concerned that, based on the survey, an estimated 783 students experienced unwanted sexual contact but just a small percentage reported it. The U.S. military and de-

fense leaders have pushed improvements in programs, leadership training and staffing to encourage more victims to report so they can receive help and perpetrators can be punished. Defense officials released preliminary data much earlier than usual this year, and said the full report will go out in February. They said the early release was done to provide better information to school leaders who are implementing changes. However, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will leave in January when President-elect Donald Trump takes office, and new leadership will take over the Pentagon. Trump and his pick to lead the Pentagon, Pete Hegseth, have vowed to eliminate "woke" policies fostering diversity and equity, and it's not clear how any of that may impact sexual assault prevention efforts.

Hegseth himself has been accused of sexual assault, which he denies, although he acknowledges making a settlement payment to the woman. □

Senate begins final push to expand Social Security benefits for millions of people

By STEPHEN GROVES

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate is pushing toward a vote on legislation that would provide full Social Security benefits to millions of people, setting up potential passage in the final days of the lame-duck Congress.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Thursday he would begin the process for a final vote on the bill, known as the Social Security Fairness Act, which would eliminate policies that currently limit Social Security payouts for roughly 2.8 million people. Schumer said the bill would "ensure Americans are not erroneously denied their well-earned Social Security benefits simply because

they chose at some point to work in their careers in public service."

The legislation passed the House on a bipartisan vote, and a Senate version of the bill introduced last year gained 62 cosponsors. But the bill still needs support from at least 60 senators to pass Congress. It would then head to President Biden.

At least one GOP senator who signed onto the bill last year, Sen. Mike Braun of Indiana, said he was still "weighing" whether to vote for the bill next week. "Nothing ever gets paid for, so if it's further indebtedness, I don't know," he said. Decades in the making, the bill would repeal two federal policies the Windfall Elimination Provision and

the Government Pension Offset that broadly reduce payments to two groups of Social Security recipients: people who also receive a pension from a job that is not covered by Social Security and surviving spouses of Social Security recipients who receive a government pension of their own.

The bill would add more strain on the Social Security Trust funds, which were already estimated to be unable to pay out full benefits beginning in 2035. It would add an estimated \$195 billion to federal deficits over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Sen. John Thune, the no. 2 Republican in leadership, acknowledged that the policy has strong bipartisan support, but said some

Republicans also want to see it "fixed in the context of a broader Social Security reform effort."

Conservatives have opposed the bill, decrying its cost. "Even for something

that people consider to be a good cause, it shows a lack of concern for the future of the country, so I think it would be a big mistake," said Sen. Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky. □



The Social Security Administration office is seen in Mount Prospect, Ill., Oct. 12, 2022.

Associated Press

New York City mayor meets with Trump's 'border czar' to discuss how to go after 'violent' criminals

By **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**
and **CEDAR ATTANASIO**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City Mayor Eric Adams met with President-elect Donald Trump's incoming "border czar" on Thursday, with the Democratic mayor expressing an enthusiasm to work with the incoming administration to pursue violent criminals in the city while Trump promises a mass deportation strategy. The mayor's meeting with Tom Homan, who will oversee the southern and northern borders and be responsible for deportation efforts in the Trump administration, came as Adams has welcomed parts of the president-elect's hardline immigration platform.

Adams told reporters at a brief news conference that he and Homan agreed on pursuing people who commit violent crimes in the city but did not disclose additional details or future plans. "We're not going to be a safe haven for those who commit repeated violent crimes against innocent migrants, immigrants and longstanding New Yorkers. That was my conversation today with the border czar,



New York City Mayor Eric Adams gestures as he leaves a press conference at City Hall following meeting with President-elect Donald Trump's incoming "border czar" Tom Homan, Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024, in New York.

to figure out how to go after those individuals who are repeatedly committing crimes in our city," Adams told reporters.

In the weeks since Trump's election win, Adams has mused about potentially scaling back the city's so-called sanctuary policies and coordinating with the incoming Trump administration on immigration. He has also said migrants ac-

cused of crimes shouldn't have due process rights under the Constitution, though he later walked back those comments.

The mayor further stunned Democrats in the city when he sidestepped questions in two televised interviews last week on whether he would consider changing parties to become a Republican, telling journalists that he was part of the "American

party." Adams later clarified that he would remain a Democrat.

For Adams, a centrist Democrat known for quarreling with the city's progressive left, the recent comments on immigration follow frustration with the Biden Administration over its immigration policies and a surge of international migrants in the city. He has maintained that his positions have not

changed and argues he is trying to protect New Yorkers, pointing to the law-and-order platform he has staked out throughout his political career and during his successful campaign for mayor.

At his news conference Thursday, Adams reiterated his commitment to New York's generous social safety net.

"We're going to tell those who are here, who are law-abiding, to continue to utilize the services that are open to the city, the services that they have a right to utilize, educating their children, health care, public protection," he said. "But we will not be the safe haven for those who commit violent acts."

While the education of all children present in the U.S. is already guaranteed by a Supreme Court ruling, New York also offers social services like healthcare and emergency shelter to low-income residents, including those in the country illegally. City and state grants also provide significant access to lawyers, which is not guaranteed in the immigration court as they are in the criminal court. □

Associated Press

New Jersey targets plastic packaging that fills landfills and pollutes

BY **WAYNE PARRY**
Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — New Jersey is aiming to drastically reduce the amount of packaging material particularly plastic that is thrown away after the package is opened.

From bubble wrap to puffy air-filled plastic pockets to those foam peanuts that seem to immediately spill all over the floor, lots of what keeps items safe during shipping often ends up in landfills, or in the environment as pollution.

A bill in the state Legislature would require all such materials used in the state to be recyclable or compostable by 2034. It had been scheduled for discussion Thursday, but was postponed until Jan. 6.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says containers and packaging materials from shopping account for about 28% of

municipal waste sent to landfills in the U.S.

The New Jersey bill seeks to move away from plastics and imposes fees on man-

ufacturers and distributors for a \$120 million fund to bolster recycling and reduce solid waste.

California, Colorado, Oregon, Maine, and Minnesota have already passed similar bills, according to the environmental group Beyond Plastics.

New Jersey's bill as proposed would be the strongest in the nation, according to Doug O'Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.

"Our waterways are literally swimming in plastics," he said. "We can't recycle our way out of this crisis."

Peter Blair, policy and advocacy director at the environmental group Just Zero, said the bill aims to shift financial responsibility for dealing with the "end-

of-life" of plastic packaging from taxpayers, who pay to have it sent to landfills, to the producers of the material.

Business groups oppose the legislation.

Ray Cantor, an official with the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, said businesses are constantly working to reduce the amount of packing materials they use, and to increase the amount of recyclables they utilize. He called the bill "unrealistic" and "not workable."

"It totally ignores the 40 years of work and systems that has made New Jersey one of the most successful recycling states in the nation," he said. "It bans a host of chemicals without any scientific basis." □



Plastic packaging materials sit atop a plastic mailing envelope in Point Pleasant, N.J., on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024.

Associated Press

Ontario to restrict electricity exports to U.S. and bar American-made alcohol if Trump tariffs applied

By ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's most populous province may bar American-made alcohol in addition to restricting electricity exports to Michigan, New York State and Minnesota if U.S. President-elect Donald Trump imposes sweeping tariffs on all Canadian products, a senior official said Thursday.

The official in Ontario Premier Doug Ford's government said that it's contemplating restricting Ontario's liquor control board from buying American-made alcohol.

Ontario is also considering restricting exports of critical minerals required for electric vehicle batteries and preventing U.S.-based companies from the government's procurement process, the official said on condition on anonymity because the functionary wasn't authorized to speak publicly about the potential measures.

Ford confirmed on Wednesday evening that Ontario is contemplating restricting electricity exports to Michigan, New York State and Minnesota. He reiterated that on Thursday and said it would make electricity unaffordable for Americans. "It's a last resort," Ford said. "I don't think President-elect Trump wants that to



Ontario Premier Doug Ford speaks to members of the media as mayors from selected municipalities and government ministers look on the Queen's Park Legislature in Toronto on Thursday Dec. 12, 2024.

Associated Press

happen. We're sending a message to the U.S. If you come and attack Ontario, you attack livelihoods of people in Ontario and Canadians, we are going to use every tool in our tool box to defend Ontarians and Canadians. Let's hope it never comes to that." Trump has threatened to impose a 25% tax on all products entering the United States from Canada and Mexico unless they stem the flow of migrants and drugs.

Ontario powered 1.5 million homes in the U.S. in 2023 and is a major exporter

of electricity to Michigan, Minnesota and New York.

"That's OK if he that does that. That's fine," Trump told CNBC when asked about Ford's remarks on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

"The United States is subsidizing Canada and we shouldn't have to do that," Trump said. "And we have a great relationship. I have so many friends in Canada, but we shouldn't have to subsidize a country. We're subsidizing more than a \$100 billion a year. We shouldn't have to be doing that." The CNBC reporter

said off camera that Trump told him that they hope they can work something out with Canada.

Canada supplies more oil to the U.S. than any other country. About 60% of U.S. crude oil imports are from Canada, and 85% of U.S. electricity imports as well.

"If you put a 25% tariff on oil from Alberta, that increases every gallon of gasoline by one dollar," said Ford, who is chairman of a council of premiers for Canada's 10 provinces and three territories.

Canada sold \$170 billion worth of energy products

last year to the U.S. It also has 34 critical minerals and metals the Pentagon is eager for.

Ontario Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said after Wednesday's meeting with the premiers that a number of provincial leaders voiced support for a robust response to the tariffs, including critical minerals being exported to the U.S. Freeland didn't mention oil, but said "obviously other ideas were discussed as well" when asked if Canada is considering cutting off oil exports to the U.S. About a third of Canada's trade to the U.S. is energy.

Nearly 3.6 billion Canadian dollars (\$2.7 billion) worth of goods and services cross the border each day. Canada is the top export destination for 36 U.S. states.

Canada has promised more border security spending to address Trump's border concerns. Ford said that will include more border and police officers, as well as drones and sniffer dogs.

Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, who along with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently had dinner with Trump at Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Florida, said they plan to share details of those border plans with the incoming Trump administration in the coming days. □

A Pakistani court indicts imprisoned former PM Imran Khan and his wife for corruption



Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan, right, and Bushra Bibi, his wife, speak to the media before signing documents to submit surety bond over his bails in different cases, at an office of Lahore High Court in Lahore, Pakistan, on July 17, 2023.

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A Pakistani court on Thursday indicted imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife in one of several graft cases they face, officials and his party said.

Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi pleaded not guilty when a judge in the garrison city of Rawalpindi read them the charges. The couple is accused of keeping and selling state gifts including jewelry they received when Khan was in office, at a value less than their market price.

Under Pakistan's laws, government officials and politicians are allowed to keep gifts they receive while in office from foreign dignitaries, but must pay their market value and declare how much they earned from their sales.

The hearing of the case was adjourned until Dec. 18 after the indictment of Khan and Bibi.

This is the second such corruption case against the couple. Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI, have said all the cases against the couple are politically motivated and are designed to keep him in prison. He has been behind bars for over a year since his conviction in another case in 2023.

Khan has been embroiled in nearly 200 criminal cases since his ouster in a no-confidence vote in parliament in 2022. □

NATO chief warns that Putin wants long-term confrontation with Europe after Ukraine

By **LORNE COOK**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte warned on Thursday that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to “wipe Ukraine off the map” and could come after other parts of Europe next, as he urged Europeans to press their governments to ramp up defense spending. “It is time to shift to a war-time mindset,” Rutte told security experts and analysts at the Carnegie Europe think-tank in Brussels. He said people should gird themselves for the prospect that Russia might try to use “swarms of drones” in Europe as it has to deadly effect in Ukraine.

Putin “is trying to crush our freedom and way of life,” Rutte said. The former Dutch prime minister listed Russia’s attacks on Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula in 2014, and the all-out invasion launched almost three years ago. “How many more wake-up calls do we need? We should be profoundly con-



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte speaks during a media conference at the conclusion of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024.

Associated Press

cerned. I know I am,” he said. “Russia is preparing for long-term confrontation. With Ukraine, and with us.” Rutte’s inaugural speech came just over two months after he took office as NATO’s top civilian official. He has since toured the capitals of the 32 allies, including a visit to NATO’s most important member,

the United States to meet with President-elect Donald Trump. NATO has been a staunch backer of Ukraine and has helped most of its members funnel weapons, ammunition and other support into the country. But Trump’s return, and pledge to end the war quickly, has fueled concern that an unfavor-

able truce might be forced on Ukraine. Asked by the Associated Press how damaging a quick and shoddy peace agreement might be, Rutte said that “a bad deal means Putin coming out on top, and that will have worldwide ramifications, not only on Europe and Ukraine.” He insisted that

Ukraine must be involved in any peace talks.

Trump routinely complains that U.S. allies in NATO are not spending enough on defense. Rutte said Russia’s military spending is likely to amount to 7 to 8% of its GDP next year far more than any NATO ally while its defense industry churns out tanks, armored vehicles and ammunition.

Putin also has the support of allies like China, Iran and North Korea.

Rutte noted that defense spending has risen sharply in Europe, with 23 allies expected to reach NATO’s target of putting 2% of GDP into their military budgets. But he added: “I can tell you, we are going to need a lot more than 2%.”

Rutte listed a series of recent “hostile actions” by Russia against NATO allies, including cyber-attacks, assassinations, an explosion at a Czech ammunition depot, the jamming of radars in the Baltic region to disrupt air traffic, and the “weaponization” of migrants to destabilize Europe. □

Bolivia extradites former anti-narcotics chief to the US to face drug trafficking charges

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — Bolivia’s former anti-narcotics chief was extradited to the United States on Thursday to face federal drug trafficking charges in a New York court.

Authorities said that Maximiliano Dávila, who served as anti-narcotics chief in the final months of Evo Morales’ 2006-2019 administration, helped facilitate plane load shipments of cocaine to the United States. Dávila boarded a private jet sent from the U.S. specifically for his extradition.

The U.S. State Department in 2022 announced a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to Dávila’s conviction. He is charged with conspiring to provide top level protection for cocaine shipments to the U.S. as well as related

weapons charges involving the possession of machine guns.

In late November, Bolivia’s Supreme Court approved Dávila’s immediate extra-

dition to the U.S. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Morales expelled the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration from Bolivia in 2008, accusing it of plotting to

overthrow his government at a time rising commodity prices and a wave of leftist politics throughout South America were challenging longstanding U.S. influence in the region. Meanwhile, the two countries haven’t exchanged ambassadors in more than 15 years.

The drug investigation that led to the charges against Dávila was started by the DEA’s Special Operations Division in 2017, according to court records.

As part of the probe, criminal informants working under the DEA’s direction recorded conversations in which a co-defendant of Dávila bragged of having access to an MD-11 military cargo plane to transport 60 tons of cocaine into the U.S.

The co-defendant, Percy

Vasquez-Drew, said that “he and other traffickers had been able to operate with impunity in Bolivia because the DEA and the CIA had been kicked out” and remaining anti-drug officials in the country were easily bribed, prosecutors said in court filings.

Vasquez-Drew was later arrested in Panama on a U.S. warrant.

He pleaded guilty in 2020 to a single count of conspiring to smuggle more than 450 kilograms of narcotics into the U.S. Earlier this year, his sentence was reduced to 100 months in federal prison.

Bolivia is the world’s third-largest producer of cocaine.

It’s unclear how close Dávila is to Morales, a former coca grower. □



Police escort former anti-drug Director of the Bolivian police, Colonel Maximiliano Davila, as he is presented to the press at a Bolivian police command office after he was arrested on charges for being tied to a drug trafficking ring, in La Paz, Bolivia, Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022.

Associated Press



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Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 1)

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good



rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the highway before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confusion among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the

airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! □



The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history



(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company.

Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.



At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curaçao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for

gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa & gold-mineranch.com.

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



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

These “coconut stands” can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of



course, fresh coconuts! Perfect during family outings around the island, these stands can be found in the following locations:

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



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Aruba to me

that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Meli'sa Morgan from Corona, Queens, NY!

She wrote to us saying: “Aruba to me is happiness and peace in my heart”! I get rejuvenated Everytime I come here. I have owned a place and been coming to Aruba to celebrate my birthday and my blessed life for 25 Years! I have owned at Paradise Beach Villas for 25 years! Every time I come to Aruba I discover something new and I fall in Love with Aruba all over again! I recently brought a new place at Renaissance Wind Creek resorts because I so enjoy feeding the flamingo's on Flamingo Island! I absolutely Love it. Being downtown Oranjestad is something new, different and refreshing. Incredible! I now stay in Aruba for most of the month of December!

I still enjoy though going to my favorite restaurants Passions on the Beach and Flying Fishbone! I en-

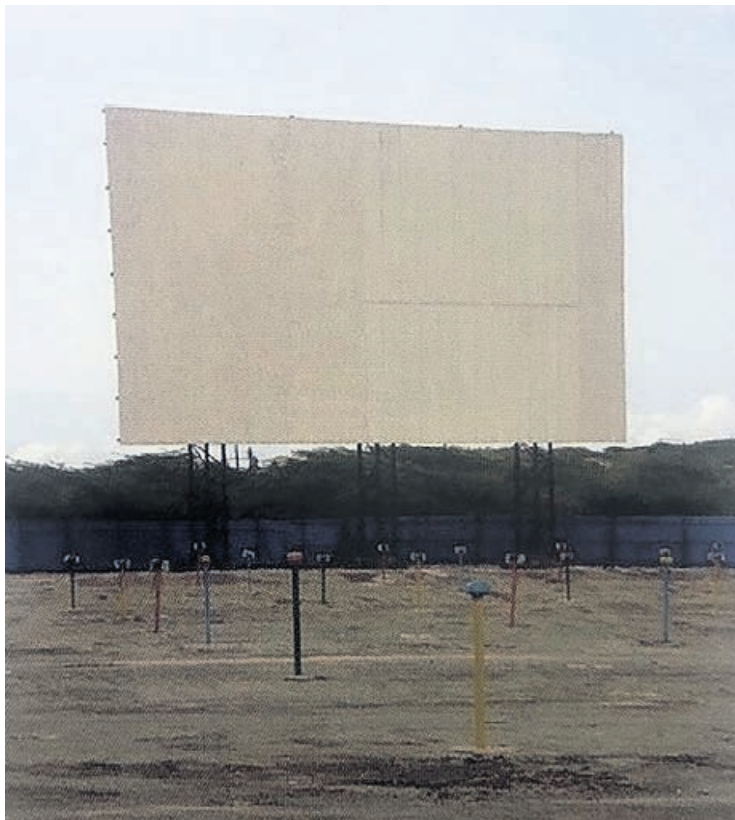
joy dressing up and wearing colors like neon green and pink that will reflect beautifully during the sunset while eating dinner and drinking virgin Daiquiri's and Piña Colada's. The salads and seafood entrees are always fresh and delicious!

Aruba is a breath of fresh air in my life every year for my birthday and i am so glad i made this beautiful place a part of my life and i still love it! Happy birthday to me!

My cousin James W. Jones from Washington, DC has joined me again this year to me Celebrate my Birthday with me. Family is Everything!”

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Forgotten gems Open air movie theaters



(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theatres. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colom-

bia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

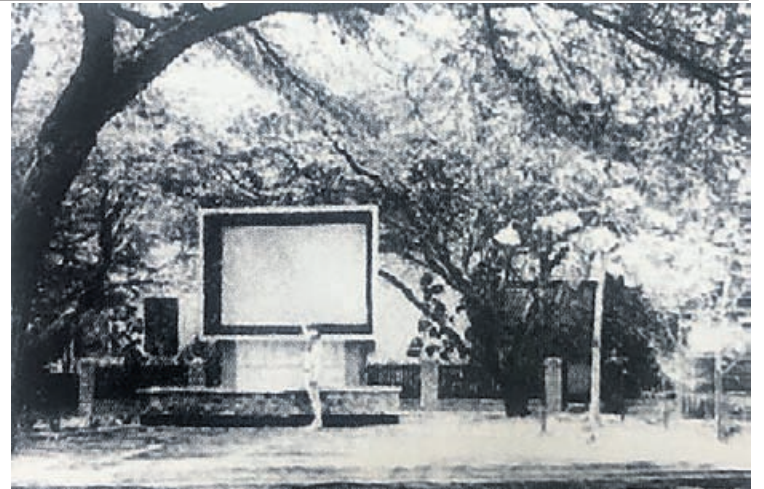
American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre,

which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.

In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around



2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two

later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi.

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.

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 govern-



ment 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.

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

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

Where to Find the Anchor?

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

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

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

About the Anchor

Size

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

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

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

Where did the Anchor Come From?

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

Story 1:

“According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of



The Red Anchor situated at the entrance of former Lago Colony in San Nicolas

the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain.”

Story 2:

“Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them.”

How Did The Anchor Become a Landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba;

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

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

Through the Years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam

Speziale, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery, graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated “To All Seamen” in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

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

The Best Time to Visit

When your planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

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

CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

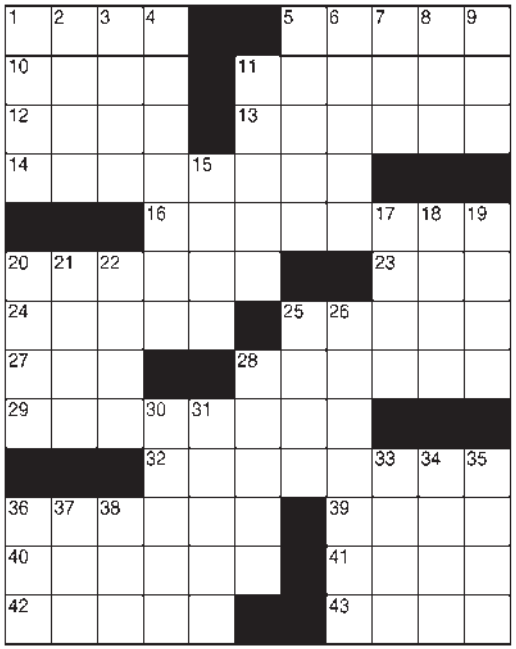
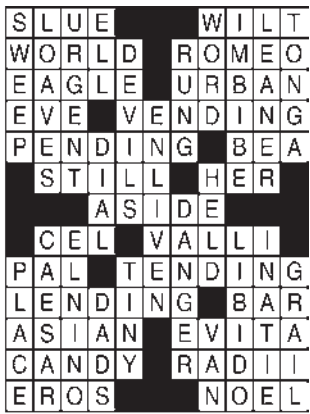
ACROSS

- 1 Brothers' home
- 5 Gave a hint
- 10 Wood strip
- 11 Som-nolent state
- 12 Love, Latin-style
- 13 Mandrill relative
- 14 Forest floor sight
- 16 Restaurant card
- 20 Fairy
- 23 Female rabbit
- 24 Fragrant flower
- 25 Quartet member
- 27 Film's Lupino
- 28 Flour merchant
- 29 Billiards variant
- 32 Oscilloscope sight
- 36 Small
- 39 Magnetic metal
- 40 Sights
- 41 Raunchy
- 42 Rotates
- 43 Highlands girl

DOWN

- 1 Commotion

- 2 Malek of "Bohemian Rhapsody"
- 3 Heaps
- 4 Added for free
- 5 Construction site
- 6 Clothing brand
- 7 First número
- 8 Green prefix
- 9 Bear lair
- 11 Steak choice
- 15 Mayor's domain
- 17 Fans' favorite
- 18 Foot feature
- 19 Rip
- 20 Go around
- 21 Toenail treatment, for short
- 22 Speckled horse
- 25 Foul
- 26 Malice
- 28 Lion features
- 30 Endorse online
- 31 Quick snacks
- 33 Open space
- 34 Wedding words
- 35 Halts
- 36 Trading spot
- 37 Outback bird
- 38 Mariner



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

12-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

OYPAXSUZX AX UBXS SPTRG
OYPAXSUZX JYVF JV
OVRVNPZSV AS NG CDAFC
SYV RACYS BQ RBDV SB
SYBXV JYB FVVL AS UBXS.

— PTSY OZPSVP XSZERVSBF
Cryptoquote: SOME PEOPLE ARE
WORTH MELTING FOR. — OLAF, "FROZEN"

Cruise ship Schedule: December 09 - 15 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	09	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE	08.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	10	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
		EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	I	1
WED	11	ZUIDERDAM	07.00	16.00	B	1
		AIDABELLA	10.00	****	C	1
		SILVER MOON	08.00	23.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	12	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	I	1
		AIDABELLA - Dept.	****	18.00	C	-
FRI	13	EVIRIMA	07.00	19.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VENEZIA	09.00	22.00	C	1
SUN	15	OCEANIA NAUTICA	11.00	21.00	C	1
		EURODAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

Supermarket hours



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

lets 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.

Electrical power



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.

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

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.

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Fewer U.S. grandparents are taking care of grandchildren, according to new data



Third-grader Dallin Curry, 8, smiles as he talks with his grandmother, Mary Durr, Sept. 6, 2024, during a Grandparents Day celebration in the lunchroom at Burns Elementary School in Owensboro, Ky. Associated Press

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**
Associated Press

Fewer grandparents were living with and taking care of grandchildren, there was a decline in young children going to pre-school and more people stayed put in their homes in the first part of the 2020s compared with the last part of the 2010s, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released Thursday, reflecting some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The latest figures from the most comprehensive survey of American life compare the years 2014-2018 and 2019-2023, timeframes before the COVID-19 pandemic and during the virus' spread. The American Community Survey data show how lives were changed and family relationships altered by the pandemic and other occurrences like the opioid crisis.

The survey of 3.5 million households covers more than 40 topics, including ancestry, fertility, marital status, commutes, veterans status, disability and housing.

The decrease in grandparents' taking care of their grandchildren is most likely because opioid-related deaths stabilized and then declined during the more

recent timeframe since substance abuse is a leading reason grandparents find themselves raising grandchildren. A reduction in the number of incarcerated women also likely played a role, said Susan Kelley, a professor emerita of nursing at Georgia State University.

"It's very rarely for positive reasons that grandparents find themselves in this situation. Usually, it's a tragic situation in an adult child's life either a death, incarceration or mental health issues which correlate with substance abuse," Kelley said. "Many grandparents thrive in that role, but there

are still socioeconomic and emotional burdens on the grandparents."

A stronger economy in the most recent period also may be a reason the number of grandparents living with their grandchildren declined from 7.2 million to 6.8 million by making it less likely that adult children with their own children were seeking housing help from their parents, she said. The decline in the number of young children enrolled in preschool stemmed from an unwillingness to send young children to school and the closure of many schools at the height of the pandemic, according to

the Census Bureau.

"These data show how the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on patterns of early childhood education," the bureau said in a separate report. "Future research will show if this was the start of a long-term trend or if enrollment will bounce back to prior levels."

Americans continued to get older, with the median age rising to 38.7 from 37.9 and the nation's share of senior citizens hitting 16.8% from 15.2%. The share of households with a computer jumped to almost 95% from nearly 89%, as did the share of households with a broadband connection to almost 90% from 80%.

Additionally, fewer people moved and more people stayed put in the most recent time period compared with the earlier one, in many cases because of rising home values and the limited availability of homes to buy. □



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Noord	527 3200
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Surinam	582 7896

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

One Tech Tip: How to protect your communications through encryption

By **KELVIN CHAN**
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — After a sprawling hacking campaign exposed the communications of an unknown number of Americans, U.S. cybersecurity officials are advising people to use encryption in their communications.

To safeguard against the risks highlighted by the campaign, which originated in China, federal cybersecurity authorities released an extensive list of security recommendations for U.S. telecom companies such as Verizon and AT&T that were targeted. The advice includes one tip we can all put into practice with our phones: "Ensure that traffic is end-to-end encrypted to the maximum extent possible."

End-to-end encryption, also known as E2EE, means that messages are scrambled so that only the sender and recipient can see them. If anyone else intercepts the message, all they will see is a garble that can't be unscrambled without the key. Law enforcement officials had until now resisted this type of encryption be-



An attendee at the Microsoft Ignite conference records an address on Nov. 19, 2024, in Chicago. Associated Press

cause it means the technology companies themselves won't be able to look at the messages, nor respond to law enforcement requests to turn the data over. Here's a look at various ways ordinary consumers can use end-to-end encryption:

Texting

Officials said the hackers targeted the metadata of a large number of custom-

ers, including information on the dates, times and recipients of calls and texts. They also managed to see the content from texts from a much smaller number of victims. If you're an iPhone user, information in text messages that you send to someone else who also has an iPhone will be encrypted end-to-end. Just look for the blue text bubbles, which indicate that they

are encrypted iMessages. The same goes for Android users sending texts through Google Messages. There will be a lock next to the timestamp on each message to indicate the encryption is on. But there's a weakness. When iPhone and Android users text each other, the messages are encrypted only using Rich Communication Services, an industry

standard for instant messaging that replaces the older SMS and MMS standards.

Apple has noted that RCS messages "aren't end-to-end encrypted, which means they're not protected from a third party reading them while they're sent between devices."

Samsung, which sells Android smartphones, has also hinted at the issue in a footnote at the bottom of a press release last month on RCS, saying, "Encryption only available for Android to Android communication."

Chat apps

To avoid getting caught out when trading texts, experts recommend using encrypted messaging apps.

Privacy advocates are big fans of Signal, which applies end-to-end encryption on all messages and voice calls. The independent nonprofit group behind the app promises never to sell, rent, or lease customer data and has made its source code publicly available so that it can be audited by anyone to examine it "for security and correctness." □

Apple's latest iPhones get the gift of more AI as holiday shopping season heats up

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Apple is pumping more artificial intelligence into the latest iPhones during the holiday shopping season with a free software update that includes a feature that enables users to create customized emojis within a matter of seconds. The Wednesday release of the iPhone's upgraded operating system, iOS 18.2, extends Apple's expansion into AI months after rivals such as Samsung and Google began implanting the revolutionary technology on their devices. The update builds upon another one that came out in late October to usher in the

AI era for Apple and the iPhone, as well as for the iPad and Mac. The latest round of AI

tricks includes "Genmojis," Apple's description for emojis that iPhone users will be able to ask the



The new iPhone 16 is displayed during an announcement of new products at Apple headquarters Monday, Sept. 9, 2024, in Cupertino, Calif.

Associated Press

technology to create and then share. Apple says it is placing some limits its AI's emoji artistry to prevent the distribution of violent or hateful imagery. Other features include an "Image Playground" for a variety of AI-styled illustrations, writing tools and options for summarizing emails. The technology won't work on iPhones that Apple made before 2023 because it requires a special processor that isn't in older models.

The AI will work on the iPhone 16 line-up that came out in September and the premium iPhone 15 models released last year. That exclusivity is expected to propel a cycle of

iPhone upgrades during the current holiday shopping season into next year, driving up Apple's profit even higher from the \$94 billion that the Cupertino, California, company pocketed in its last fiscal year ending in September. That expectation is the main reason Apple's stock price has climbed by about 30% so far this year to push the company's market value closer to the \$4 trillion threshold for the first time.

Apple is broadening the AI suite's appeal by including English versions tailored for Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and the U.K. that are included in the latest software update. □

Team claims NASCAR rescinded approval to buy new charter unless federal antitrust suit is dropped

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer
CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

Front Row Motorsports, one of two teams suing NASCAR in federal court, accused the stock car series Thursday of rejecting the planned purchase of a valuable charter unless the lawsuit was dropped.

Front Row made the claim in a court filing and said it involved its proposed purchase of the charter from Stewart-Haas Racing. Front Row said the series would only approve it if Front Row and 23XI Racing dropped their court case.

"Specifically, NASCAR informed us that it would not approve the (charter) transfer unless we agreed to drop our current antitrust lawsuit against them," Jerry Freeze, general manager of Front Row, said in an affidavit filed in the U.S. District Court of Western North Carolina.

The two teams in September refused to sign NASCAR's "take-it-or-leave-it" final offer on a new revenue sharing agreement. All other 13 teams signed the deal.

Front Row and 23XI balked and are now in court. 23XI co-owner Michael Jordan has said he took the fight to court on behalf of all teams competing in the top motorsports series in the United States. NASCAR has



Car owner Michael Jordan watches from the pits during a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Homestead-Miami Speedway in Homestead, Fla., Oct. 27, 2024.

argued that the two teams simply do not like the terms of the final charter agreement and asked for the lawsuit be dismissed.

Earlier this week, the suit was transferred to a different judge than the one who heard the first round of arguments and ruled against the two teams in their request for a temporary injunction to be recognized in 2025 as chartered teams as the case proceeds.

The latest filing is heavily redacted as it lays out alleged retaliatory actions by NASCAR the teams say

have caused irreparable harm.

Both Front Row and 23XI want to expand from two full-time cars to three, and have agreements with SHR to purchase one charter each as SHR goes from four cars to one for 2025. The teams can still compete next season but would have to do so as "open" teams that don't have the same protections or financial gains that come from holding a charter.

Freeze claimed in the affidavit that Front Row signed a purchase agreement

with SHR in April and NASCAR President Steve Phelps told Freeze in September the deal had been approved.

But when Front Row submitted the paperwork last month, NASCAR began asking for additional information. A Dec. 4 request from NASCAR was "primarily related to our ongoing lawsuit with NASCAR," Freeze said.

"NASCAR informed us on December 5, 2024, that it objected to the transfer and would not approve it, in contrast to the pre-

vious oral approval for the transfer confirmed by Phelps before we filed the lawsuit," Freeze said. "NASCAR made it clear that the reason it was now changing course and objecting to the transfer is because NASCAR is insisting that we drop the lawsuit and antitrust claims against it as a condition of being approved."

A second affidavit from Steve Lauletta, the president of 23XI Racing, claims NASCAR accused 23XI and Front Row of manufacturing "new circumstances" in a renewed motion for an injunction and of a "coordinated effort behind the scenes."

"This is completely false," Lauletta said.

Front Row is owned by businessman Bob Jenkins, while 23XI is owned by retired NBA Hall of Famer Jordan, three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin and longtime Jordan adviser Curtis Polk.

NASCAR had been operating with 36 chartered teams and four open spots since the charter agreement began in 2016. NASCAR now says it will move forward in 2025 with 32 chartered teams and eight open spots, with offers on charters for Front Row and 23XI rescinded and the SHR charters in limbo. □

Associated Press

Ohio politician proposes bill to make flag planting a felony after fight in Michigan rivalry game

By The Associated Press

An Ohio politician has seen enough flag planting by visiting sports teams. Republican state Rep. Josh Williams said Wednesday on social media he's introducing a bill to make flag planting in sports a felony in the state. His proposal comes after the Nov. 30 fight at the Michigan-Ohio State rivalry football game when the Wolverines beat the Buckeyes 13-10 and then attempted to plant their flag at midfield. A fight ensued and police had to use pepper spray to disperse the players.

Similar flag-planting scuffles broke out across college football on that rivalry weekend. Williams is calling it the O.H.I.O Sportsmanship Act.

"Behavior that incites violent brawls and puts our law enforcement officers in danger has no place on the football field," Williams said.

Former Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield famously planted a flag in the middle of the field at Ohio State after the Sooners beat the Buckeyes in 2017.

Mayfield, who now plays for the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers, said he doesn't think flag planting is a big deal.

"I'll say this: OU-Texas does it every time they play," Mayfield said on Dec. 1. "It's not anything special. You take your 'L' and you move on. I'll leave it at that." □



Michigan players celebrate their win over Ohio State in an NCAA college football game Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio.

Associated Press



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Bill Belichick 'always wanted' to give college coaching a try. Now he will at North Carolina

By AARON BEARD
AP Sports Writer

Bill Belichick had just been introduced Thursday as North Carolina's next football coach when chancellor Lee Roberts came armed with a gift: a short-sleeved gray hoodie a bit of a trademark from Belichick's NFL coaching days bearing a blue interlocking "NC" logo.

It was the visual confirmation, which will take some getting used to, that the six-time Super Bowl-winning head coach whose name became synonymous with NFL success has taken an unexpected first dive into college coaching. He now leads a program at a school with a national name brand but one that has been unable to sustain fleeting pockets of high-level success when it comes to football.

"I've always wanted to coach in college football,"

Belichick said during his introductory campus news conference. "It just never really worked out. Had

some good years in the NFL, so that was OK."

The school's trustees approved terms of the deal

to hire Belichick as the new football coach earlier Thursday. Specific terms have yet to be released, though

the school said Wednesday there was a five-year agreement. Belichick arrived wearing a dark suit, a light blue dress shirt and a tie bearing a white-and-light-blue pattern. He sat between Roberts and athletic director Bubba Cunningham, who paid his own tribute by donning a suit jacket with the sleeves cut off to mimic Belichick's cut-off sideline look.

"I'm here to, as Bubba said, teach, develop and build a program in the way that I believe in," Belichick said. Moving on from the 73-year-old Mack Brown to hire the 72-year-old Belichick means UNC is turning to a coach who has never worked at the college level, yet had incredible success in the NFL alongside quarterback Tom Brady throughout most of his 24-year tenure with the Patriots, which ended last season. □



New North Carolina football coach Bill Belichick holds up a UNC branded sleeveless hoodie presented to him during an NCAA college football press conference announcing his hiring, Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024, in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Associated Press