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Minnesota considers blocking 'nudify' apps that use AI to make explicit images without consent

By **STEVE KARNOWSKI**

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Molly Kelly was stunned to discover in June that someone she knew had used widely available "nudification" technology to create highly realistic and sexually explicit videos and images of her, using family photos that were posted on social media.

"My initial shock turned to horror when I learned that the same person targeted about 80, 85 other women, most of whom live in Minnesota, some of whom I know personally, and all of them had connections in some way to the offender," Kelly said.

Backed by her testimony, Minnesota is considering a new strategy for cracking down on deepfake pornography. A bill that has bipartisan support would target companies that run websites and apps allowing people to upload a photo that then would be transformed into explicit images or videos.

States across the country and Congress are considering strategies for regulating artificial intelligence. Most have banned the dissemination of sexually explicit deepfakes or revenge porn whether they were produced with AI or not. The idea behind the Minnesota legislation is to prevent the material from ever being created before it spreads online.

Experts on AI law caution the proposal might be unconstitutional on free speech grounds.

Why advocates say the bill is needed

The lead author, Democratic Sen. Erin Maye Quade, said additional restrictions are necessary



Minnesota Democratic State Senator Erin Maye Quade, center, discusses her bill to crack down on "nudification" apps during a news conference at the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul on Monday, Feb. 24, 2025. She was joined by Megan Hurley, left, and Molly Kelly, right, who both told reporters how they were victims of the technology.

Associated Press

because AI technology has advanced so rapidly. Her bill would require the operators of "nudification" sites and apps to turn them off to people in Minnesota or face civil penalties up to \$500,000 "for each unlawful access, download, or use." Developers would need to figure out how to turn off the function for Minnesota users.

It's not just the dissemination that's harmful to victims, she said. It's the fact that these images exist at all.

Kelly told reporters last month that anyone can quickly create "hyper-realistic nude images or pornographic video" in minutes. Most law enforcement attention so far has been focused on distribution and possession.

Congress, states and cities are also trying other tactics. San Francisco in August filed a first-of-its-kind lawsuit against several widely visited

"nudification" websites, alleging they broke state laws against fraudulent business practices, non-consensual pornography and the sexual abuse of children. That case remains pending.

The U.S. Senate last month unanimously approved a bill by Democrat Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, and Republican Ted Cruz, of Texas, to make it a federal crime to publish non-consensual sexual imagery, including AI-generated deepfakes. Social media platforms would be required to remove them within 48 hours of notice from a victim. Melania Trump on Monday used her first solo appearance since becoming first lady again to urge passage by the Republican-controlled House, where it's pending.

The Kansas House last month approved a bill that expands the definition of illegal sexual exploitation

of a child to include possession of images generated with AI if they're "indistinguishable from a real child, morphed from a real child's image or generated without any actual child involvement."

A bill introduced in the Florida Legislature creates a new felony for people who use technology such as AI to generate nude images and criminalizes possession of child sexual abuse images generated with it. Broadly similar bills have also been introduced in Illinois, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Texas, according to an Associated Press analysis using the bill-tracking software Plural. Maye Quade said she'll be sharing her proposal with legislators in other states because few are aware the technology is so readily accessible. "If we can't get Congress to act, then we

can maybe get as many states as possible to take action," Maye Quade said.

Victims tell their stories. Sandi Johnson, senior legislative policy counsel for the victim's rights group RAINN the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, said the Minnesota bill would hold websites accountable.

"Once the images are created, they can be posted anonymously, or rapidly widely disseminated, and become nearly impossible to remove," she testified recently.

Megan Hurley also was horrified to learn someone had generated explicit images and video of her using a "nudification" site. She said she feels especially humiliated because she's a massage therapist, a profession that's already sexualized in some minds.

"It is far too easy for one person to use their phone or computer and create convincing, synthetic, intimate imagery of you, your family, and friends, your children, your grandchildren," Hurley said. "I do not understand why this technology exists and I find it abhorrent there are companies out there making money in this manner."

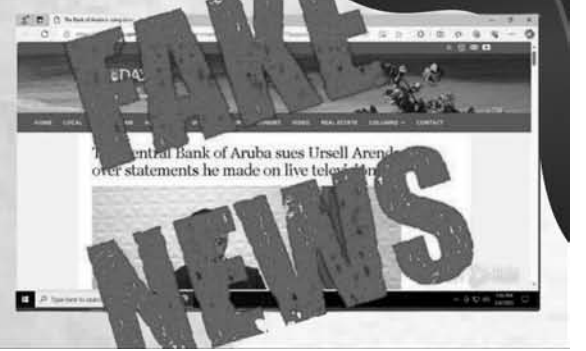
AI experts urge caution. However, two AI law experts, Wayne Unger of the Quinnipiac University School of Law and Riana Pfefferkorn of Stanford University's Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, said the Minnesota bill is too broadly constructed to survive a court challenge.

Limiting the scope only to images of real children might help it withstand a First Amendment challenge since those are generally not protected, Pfefferkorn said. □

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Democrats seek to probe Musk conflicts and DOGE firings with resolutions of inquiry in the House

By LISA MASCARO
AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats on the House Oversight Committee are introducing a pair of resolutions demanding the Trump administration turn over documents and information about billionaire adviser Elon Musk's potential conflicts of interest and the firings of federal workers. The Associated Press has learned.

It's the most aggressive move yet by Democrats trying to confront President Donald Trump's actions. The top Democrat on the panel, Rep. Gerald Connolly of Virginia, and Rep. Rep. Kweisi Mfume of Maryland are leading the effort as the party mounts a resistance against the Trump-Musk dismantling of government.

The resolutions of inquiry



Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-Va., left, says hello to House Oversight and Accountability subcommittee on Government Operations ranking member, Rep. Kweisi Mfume, D-Md., during a subcommittee hearing, May 17, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

subcommittee on Government Operations, probing

government, slashing jobs and programs in search of

ing notes, phone, mail and text records, and other in-

formation regarding:

"Each Federal employee placed on administrative leave, removed due to a reduction in force action, terminated, transferred, or reassigned to another department on orders, advice, or recommendation of Elon Musk, any individual considered to be a member of a DOGE agency team, or any official or unofficial member of the United States DOGE Service."

It would also require documents, communications and information about the Office of Personnel Management's decisions around the firings determination of diversity, equity and inclusion employees or those in offices working to improve DEI. And it seeks information regarding the firings of the inspectors general "including whether to notify Congress as legally required."□

Census Bureau under Trump seeks permission to delete questions about gender identity

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

The U.S. Census Bureau under the Trump administration has sought permission to delete questions about gender identity from a monthly survey that gathers near real-time data about American life.

The Census Bureau two weeks ago asked the Office of Management and Budget for permission to delete questions about gender identity from the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey. The agency said the Feb. 14 request was made to align with President Donald Trump's order stripping fed-

eral money from programs that "promote gender ideology."

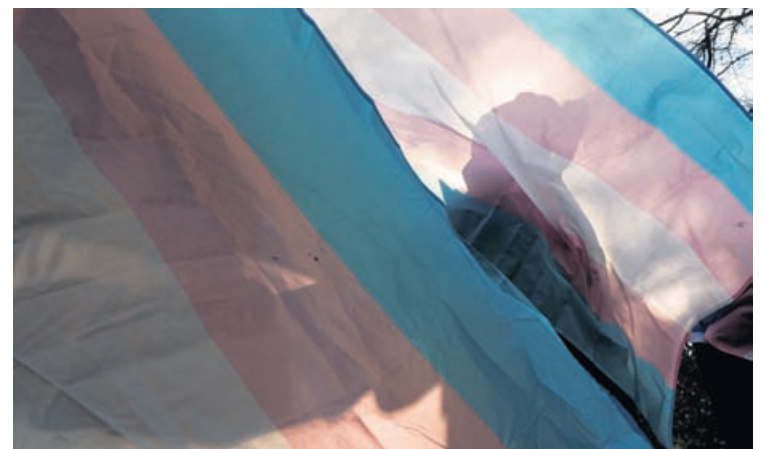
Issued on the first day of Trump's second term in January, his order calls for the federal government to define sex as only male or female and for that to be reflected on official documents such as passports and through policies such as federal prison assignments. The position conflicts with what the American Medical Association and other mainstream medical groups say: that extensive scientific research suggests sex and gender are better understood as a spectrum than by an either-or defi-

nition. Trump has targeted transgender and nonbinary people with a series of executive orders since he returned to office. Several civil rights groups have challenged the orders in court. A federal judge in Seattle on Friday blocked most of Trump's plan to pull federal funding from institutions that provide gender-affirming care for transgender youth, pending a final decision on the merits of the case.

The Census Bureau has had plans to ask questions about sexual identity and gender identity on the 2027 American Community Survey, the most compre-

hensive survey of American life. Questions about sexual orientation and gender identity started being

tested in August with trial questionnaires sent out to several hundred thousand households.□



A protester is silhouetted against a trans pride flag during a transgender rights protest outside of Seattle Children's Hospital, Feb. 9, 2025, in Seattle.

Associated Press

California juvenile detention officers staged 'gladiator fights' between youth, indictment says

By JAIMIE DING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Thirty officers at a Southern California juvenile detention facility have been charged for their role in facilitating so-called "gladiator fights" between youth in their care, the state's attorney general said Monday.

A grand jury indictment alleges the officers at Los Padornos Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles County allowed and sometimes encouraged nearly 70 fights to take place between July 2023 and December 2023. More than 140 victims between the ages of 12 and 18 were involved.

"We believe that this was planned, it was intended," Attorney General Rob Bonta said.

"They often wanted them to happen at the beginning of the day, in a certain time, in a certain place, a space and a time was created for the fights, and the plan was for the fights to happen."

The officers face charges including child endanger-



California Attorney General Rob Bonta speaks at a news conference at the San Francisco Public Library's Bernal Heights branch in San Francisco, Dec. 4, 2024.

ment and abuse, conspiracy, and battery.

Twenty-two of the officers were scheduled to be arraigned Monday at the Los Angeles County Superior Court.

The investigation began after the Los Angeles Times first obtained and pub-

lished footage that shows a 17-year-old being attacked by at least six other young people, who come at him one-by-one as officers stand by watching. Some officers appear to laugh and shake hands with the participants in the beating.

The video was first made public during a court hearing during which the 17-year-old's public defender argued to a judge that he was not safe at Los Padornos and should be released ahead of his trial. The indictment singles out two probation officers who

allegedly told staff members ahead of time that fights would occur and "they were not to say anything, write down anything, and just watch." It also alleges one of the officers told youths involved to "refuse treatment when they went to medical to get treated by nurses."

The LA County Probation Department, which runs the facility, said in a statement that it "fully supports and applauds" the attorney general's office for Monday's indictments, and that all officers involved are on leave without pay.

"Our department sought the assistance of law enforcement authorities when misconduct was discovered," the statement said. "Since then, we have fully collaborated with our law enforcement partners. ... Accountability is a cornerstone of our mission, and we have zero tolerance for misconduct of any peace officers, especially those dealing with young people in our system." □

Associated Press

BlackRock strikes deal to bring ports on both sides of Panama Canal under American control

By DIDI TANG and ALEX VEIGA

Associated Press

A Hong Kong-based conglomerate has agreed to sell its controlling stake in a subsidiary that operates ports near the Panama Canal to a consortium in-

cluding BlackRock Inc., effectively putting the ports under American control after President Donald Trump alleged Chinese interference with the operations of the critical shipping lane.

In a filing, CK Hutchison

Holding said Tuesday that it would sell all shares in Hutchison Port Holdings and in Hutchison Port Group Holdings to the consortium in a deal valued at nearly \$23 billion, including \$5 billion in debt.

The deal will give the BlackRock consortium control over 43 ports in 23 countries, including the ports of Balboa and Cristobal, located at either end of the Panama Canal. Other ports are in Mexico, the Netherlands, Egypt, Australia, Pakistan and elsewhere.

The transaction, which must be approved by Panama's government, does not include any interest in a trust that operates ports in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and South China, or any other ports in China.

Some 70% of the sea traffic

that crosses the Panama Canal leaves or goes to U.S. ports. The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter. Trump has claimed that Carter "foolishly" gave the canal away. Trump and his supporters have also complained about the fees that ships are charged to use the waterway and alleged that China has been operating the canal, an assertion denied by Panama's government.

In January, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, the Republican chair of the Senate Committee

on Commerce, Science and Transportation, raised concerns that China could exploit or block passage through the canal and that the ports "give China ready observation posts" to take action. "This situation, I believe, poses acute risks for U.S. national security," Cruz said.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Panama in early February and told President José Raúl Mulino that Panama had to reduce Chinese influence over the canal or face potential retaliation from the United States. Mulino rejected the idea that China had any control over canal operations.

Panama quit China's Belt and Road Initiative following Rubio's visit, drawing condemnation from Beijing. □



A cargo ship goes through the Panama Canal's Cocoli locks in Panama City, Friday, Feb. 21, 2025.

Associated Press

Mexico says it will impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S. with details coming Sunday

By **MARÍA VERZA** and **MEGAN JANETSKY**
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president said Tuesday the country will respond to the 25% tariffs imposed by the United States with retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods, with details to come.

Mexico will announce the targeted products and other measures Sunday at an event in Mexico City's central plaza, a delay that suggests Mexico hopes to de-escalate the trade war set off by U.S. President Donald Trump.

President Claudia Sheinbaum said she and Trump had agreed to have a call this week, most likely Thursday, "so we are going to wait." Mexico's government has said since January it had a plan ready for this scenario.

"There is no motive or reason, nor justification that supports this decision that will affect our people and our nations," Sheinbaum added.

China and Canada responded immediately with measures Tuesday.

Some 80% of Mexico's exports go to the United States, part of more than \$800 billion in trade between the countries last year.

Sheinbaum called "offensive, defamatory and without support" the White House allegations that Mexican drug traffickers persist because of "an intolerable relationship" with the Mexican government. Trump has said he's targeting Mexico to force it to crack down on migrants and drugs entering the U.S. She listed the achievements of her young administration against Mexico's drug cartels, including seizing more than a ton of fentanyl and dismantling 329 methamphetamine labs. She also noted that Mexico sent the U.S. 29 drug cartel figures it requested last week.

"It's inconceivable that they don't think about the damage this is going to cause to United States



Susano Cordoba, right, gestures towards trucks lining up to cross the border into the United States as tariffs against Mexico go into effect, Tuesday, March 4, 2025, in Tijuana, Mexico.

Associated Press

citizens and businesses," Sheinbaum said. "No one wins with this decision."

Mexico's president also noted that Trump on Monday said he respected her, and she said she respected him as well: "The thing is finding a way to collaborate, of coordinating without subordinating anyone for the benefit of our people."

Trade experts expressed doubt over how long Trump's tariffs would last, saying they would boost prices for American consumers including Trump's base.

"It is going to do nothing to help with the food inflation in the U.S.," said Timothy Wise, an expert on agricultural trade between Mexico and the U.S. "I don't see it as sustainable. I don't find it plausible that corporate folks who surround Trump are going to sit back and allow him to destroy their foreign markets."

Gabriela Siller, economic analyst with Mexican financial group Banco Base, said in the short term, the tariffs could boost inflation, disrupt economic trade flows and slow economic growth for both countries. But as she watched the gradually falling Mexican peso, she also noted "the exchange rate and volatility have not skyrocketed,

as the market speculates that the U.S. government could withdraw the tariffs soon."

Mexico has the most to potentially lose in a trade war with the U.S., and economists say extended tariffs would plunge Mexico's economy into a recession. But for now, Sheinbaum's approval ratings in Mexico are sky high. She has fanned nationalist sentiment since before Trump took office, frequently invoking Mexico's sovereignty, promising it will negotiate from a position of equals and pushing back on Trump's name change of the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America. □

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China slaps extra tariffs of up to 15% on imports of major U.S. farm exports and adds trade limits

By The Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China responded to new U.S. tariffs by announcing Tuesday it will impose additional tariffs of up to 15% on imports of key U.S. farm products, including chicken, pork, soy and beef, and expanded controls on doing business with key U.S. companies.

The tariffs announced by the Commerce Ministry will take effect from March 10, though goods already in transit will be exempt until April 12. They follow U.S. President Donald Trump's order to raise tariffs on imports of Chinese products to 20% across the board. A range of Chinese goods were already subject to 10-25% tariffs levied by Trump during his first term.

The newer tariffs took effect on Tuesday, along with 25% tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico.

China's is a major importer of American farm products. Purchases dipped after Trump launched a trade war during his first term and then recovered.

Now, imports of U.S.-grown chicken, wheat, corn and cotton will face an extra 15% tariff, the Chinese ministry said. Tariffs on sorghum,



U.S. first lady Melania Trump hands out bald eagle dolls to Chinese children holding U.S. and Chinese flags near the panda enclosure at a zoo in Beijing, on Nov. 10, 2017.

Associated Press

soybeans, pork, beef, seafood, fruit, vegetables and dairy products will be increased by 10%.

The U.S. tariffs began a day before the annual session of China's parliament, which begins Wednesday and will focus in part on deflation and other issues affecting the world's second largest economy.

By raising tariffs, the U.S. has repaid kindness with en-

mity, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said, adding, "I would like to reiterate that the Chinese people have never been afraid of evil, do not believe in ghosts, and have never been bullied."

While the tariffs on American farm products are sweeping, China held back from imposing higher ones across the board, and "both sides showed

restraint," said Sun Chenghao, an international relations professor at Beijing's Tsinghua University.

"The U.S. hopes to get a trade deal with China in the end," Sun said. "For the long term, it is possible that China and the U.S. will continue to negotiate, but the current atmosphere is not good." Separately, China's customs said it was suspending the import of

U.S. lumber effective immediately, saying it had detected "forest pests such as bark beetles and longhorn beetles" in imported logs. China also suspended the soybean import qualifications of three U.S. companies after saying it detected ergot a kind of fungi as well as seed-coating agents in soybeans exported to China.

The Commerce Ministry also launched its first anti-circumvention investigation into the import of fiber optic products from the U.S., which it said was initiated at the request of a domestic fiber optic company. The evidence submitted showed that U.S. exporters "may have circumvented China's anti-dumping measures" on certain products, the ministry said. Also Tuesday, Beijing placed 10 more U.S. firms on its unreliable entity list, which would bar them from engaging in China-related import or export activities and making new investments in the country. Some already likely face restrictions on trade with China if their products can be used for both military and civilian purposes. □

Trudeau slams Trump's tariffs, says U.S. is appeasing Putin while launching a trade war against Canada



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds a news conference on imposed U.S. tariffs as Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly, Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc and Public Safety Minister David McGuinty look on in Ottawa on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

Associated Press

By ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called American tariffs "very dumb" and said that U.S. President Donald Trump is appeasing Russia while launching a trade war against Canada. In a blunt news conference during his final days in office, Trudeau said that Canada would plaster retaliatory tariffs on more than \$100 billion of American goods in response to Trump's 25% tariffs.

"Today the United States launched a trade war against Canada, their closest partner and ally, their closest friend.

At the same, they are talking about working positively with Russia, appeasing Vladimir Putin, a lying, murderous dictator. Make that make sense," a visibly angry Trudeau said.


Trump imposed tariffs against Washington's three biggest trading partners, drawing immediate retaliation from Mexico,

Canada and China and sending financial markets into a tailspin. Just after midnight, Trump put 25% taxes, or tariffs, on Mexican and Canadian imports, though he limited the levy to 10% on Canadian energy.

"What he wants to see is a total collapse of the Canadian economy because that will make it easier to annex us," Trudeau said. "That is never going to happen. We will never be the 51st state."

Trudeau addressed Trump directly by his first name. "I want to speak directly to one specific American, Donald," Trudeau said. "It's not in my habit to agree with the Wall Street Journal, but Donald, they point out that even though you're a very smart guy, this is a very dumb thing to do."

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said: "Please explain to Governor Trudeau, of Canada, that when he puts on a Retaliatory Tariff on the U.S., our Reciprocal Tariff will immediately increase by a like amount!" □



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es the limit and sets a new standard for fine dining on the island, bringing the story of each local producer into the spotlight and taking the guests on a grand culinary tour of the island. Enjoy their superb menu with a wide selection of Old World wines from Spain, Portugal, France and even Lebanon.

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of Aruba, Infini has collaborated with LOVEmade Aruba to create their signature fragrance, available only at Infini. Adding another layer of luxury to the fine dining experience, Infini pampers their guest with a luxurious and organic cleansing oil made from Cayena flower. This added service is included in the carefully-crafted dining course, inviting guests to be part of this exclusive and unique partnership.



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Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)--If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the pre-historic caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the

famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Arikok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area includes the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet

(Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint

by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas.

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.



f Caya House **@** CayaHouse **📍** J.E Irausquin Blvd 372 **🌐** www.caya.aw **@** reservations@caya.aw

Chef David Lizano Sarmiento brings a new flare to Caya House!



(Oranjestad)—Caya House is adding a new member to the family: Chef David Lizano Sarmiento! Born and bred in Peru, Chef David's passion for the culinary arts started from a very young age and inspired him to work with some of the greats. Now, he's excited to bring his expertise and passion to Caya!

For David, cooking isn't just a career; it's a passion rooted in family and tradition. Growing up in Peru, he began cooking to help his parents,



but it was his mother who recognized his innate talent for creating delicious food. She encouraged him to pursue his culinary dreams, and he hasn't looked back.

David's culinary journey took him to Nova Escuela and Cenfotur in Lima, where he refined his skills and deepened his understanding of Peruvian cuisine. He had the privilege of working at Madam Tusan, a restaurant by the internationally acclaimed Chef Gaston Acurio, a true inspiration in the culinary world. This experience instilled in him a commitment to quality and innovation.

Prior to joining the Caya team, David led the kitchens of two popular local restaurants as Executive Chef.

Get a taste of what Chef David has to offer

Caya House is excited and proud to present some Caribbean Nikkei dishes on their new menu with the collaboration of Chef David on March 17. Here's a small preview of what Chef David offers his guests:

Beef Tataki Chino Latino

Potato and beets salad served with marinated tenderloin, pickled onions, piccaililli mayo, fried onions, cilantro, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, avocado and a Maggi seasoning sauce vinaigrette

Join Caya on their new adventure!

Make your reservation at +297-6993982 or reservations@caya.aw. Caya House is located at J.E. Irausquin Blvd 372, Noord, Aruba and is open Mondays through Sundays, 5:30 pm – 11:00 pm.

About Caya House

Founded in 2022, Caya House is built upon the foundation of a beautifully restored Aruban Cunucu House. Our goal was to preserve the essence of traditional architecture while creating a space where the rich flavors of Latin America and the Caribbean could be celebrated. □



Blackstone Beach

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



different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

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

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern



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



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Up for some adventure? Join ACF's Rough Hike!

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) is hosting another one of their famous Rough Hikes and is inviting the community to participate for a relaxing and challenging hike through Aruba's National Park Arikok.

On Sunday, March 9th, starting early in the morning at 5:45 AM, the group will meet at the Arikok Visitor Center at San Fuego, Santa Cruz. The hike will take you through Miralamar, Jamanota, Cashunti, Shidaharaka and finishes at Jara Sport Complex in Savaneta. Participants will be taken back to the Arikok Visitor Center via bus transport provided by the ACF. This hike will take approximately 4 hours and covers 8.6 km/5.3 mi of distance. Don't miss on an opportunity to get up close to nature as you trail under the guidance of an experience ranger. Register using the link <https://forms.office.com/r/iB6Das2LCv> or call the ACF at 585-1234 for more information. □

Picture credit: Aruba Conservation Foundation



Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he

who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the

island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of

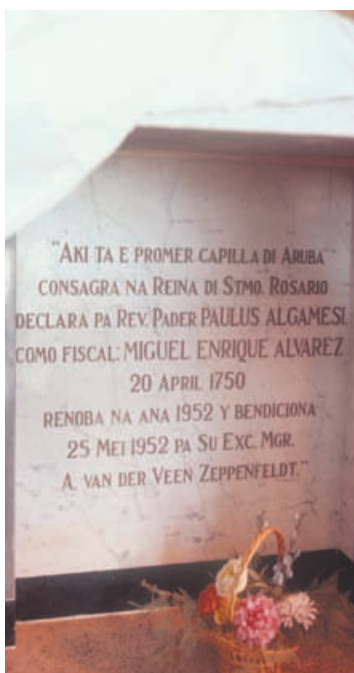


clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there

is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □





Article by Etnia Nativa

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Invasive species

Our narratives emphasize the necessary balance that must prevail in all that we do and tolerate, especially on a small island like ours, an easy-going colonial existence with its own tribal blend. The defense of cultural heritage and combating hazards against insular biodiversity has reached alarming levels. The challenges of global warming and overpopulation encroachments create a menace to natural habitats and sacred lands. This platform actively engages in promoting the value of rediscovering native traditions, which the unique spirit behind being an Aruban is all about, beyond history and identities, highlighting the importance of moving on beyond all opposition.

In this episode we will share a bit about invasive plants and how managing their spread is crucial for protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, mitigating their negative impact on native species and habitats.

Invasive plants can cause significant damage to the environment and out-compete native species for light, water, and soil nutrients, and can overshadow local species, leading to reduced biodiversity. For example, some of them might alter soil chemistry or water availability, causing economic damage, especially in agriculture. They can reduce crop yields by introducing pests and diseases and can also require

management efforts, such as herbicide treatments. Their ability to quickly spread and colonize new areas can outpace the ability of native species to adapt to changing climate conditions.

In previous episodes we have referred to the rubber vine as an invasive species in Aruba, which was introduced. Today we want to highlight the important spread of the Neem tree, *Azadirachta indica*, a tree native to India which has been used in traditional medicine, agriculture, and as a natural pesticide for thousands of years. All parts of the Neem are used for the treatment of inflammation, infections, fever, skin diseases and dental disorders. But especially the oil extracted from the fruits.

It is a fast-growing and generally ever-green tree, and in the case of severe drought it can lose its leaves. The outer layers of the wood are light-colored, and the core is reddish. Neem is monoecious, meaning it produces male and female flowers on the same plant.

Episode CCXCIII -293

When the tree is four years old, it can bear fruit for the first time. After ten years it can produce about fifty kilos of fruit. The fruit is a drupe similar to an olive, with thin skin, pale yellow flesh and a sweet and sour taste.

Neem can be found on almost all continents. The species is widely planted in areas with tropical and subtropical climates and is known by different names in different countries. Locally, the plant is considered an invasive species.

The use of neem products in medicine has a long tradition in India. Outside India, the plant is widely used to prepare a biological insecticide: azadirachtin. The neem tree attracts worldwide attention for its medicinal and antibiotic properties. It has been the subject of scientific research and, in Occident in the 90s, started a battle for its patent.

The Indian government argued that the patents were unfair and violated the rights of Indian farmers and communities who had long used neem-derived products, and took legal action to challenge them at the international level, arguing that the patent was invalid because neem's properties were well known prior to the patent application and that the company's invention was neither novel nor original. India's position was that the neem patent was a clear case of bio-piracy because knowledge of neem's medicinal and pesticide properties was part of traditional Indian knowledge. This knowledge had been passed down through generations and had not been patented by the people who had used it for centuries. □



If you enjoyed reading our stories and are interested in learning more regarding the true identity of Aruba, we recommend you to book a visit to Etnia Nativa—the only “living museum of its kind in the Caribbean”—a fascinating choice, a trend setter since 1994 as co-founder of Arikock National Park, Archaeological Museum and Artisan Foundation among others. Etnia Nativa shares valuable knowledge and connects you to the ancient island's spirit and soul.

Whats App+297 592 2702
etniana03@gmail.com

Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called Did you know about...?, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

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

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

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

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



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

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

Current design and symbolism 10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Turtuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupiaal, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also

a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

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

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

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

Extra fact:

the word “florin” supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word “florino”, both explanations related to historical Italian currencies.□

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Salon meal
sound 40 Important
5 Perfume times
unit 41 Style

- 9 Pay
tribute to

- 11 Bowling round
12 Confuse

- 13 External
14 Floral accessory

- 15 Pulling with effort
17 Trailing behind

- 19 Exalted work
20 Unfettered

- 21 Hosp. workers
22 Scarlett's last name

- 24 Suffered from
26 Fails miserably

- 29 Heir, often
30 Gaiter's cousin

- 32 Timber business
34 West of films

- 35 Steer clear of
36 Summon up

- 38 Shore fliers

DOWN

- 1 "We — overcome"

- 2 "Forget it!"

- 3 Blue hue

- 4 Campaign pro

- 5 Pharmacy buy

- 6 Parcel out

- 7 Adds changes to

- 8 Join together

- 10 Keen enjoyment



- 11 Verne's traveler like a

- 16 Left on conga line

- 18 Evil 29 List of

- 6 Parcel out fighter candi-

- 21 Told dates

- 23 In tatters 30 Tops

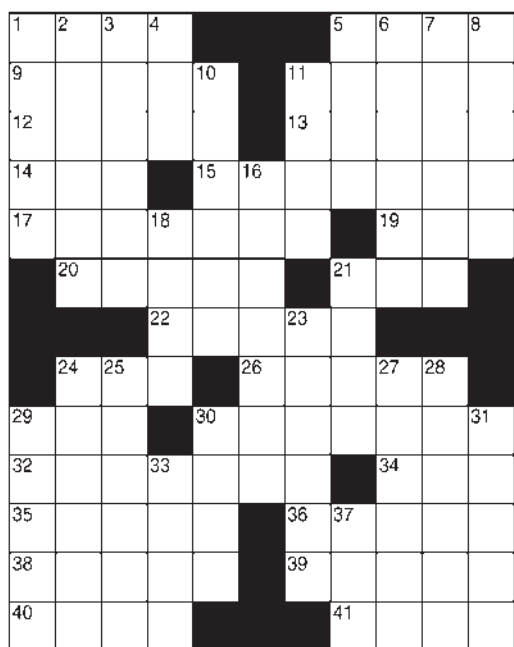
- 24 Coolidge's 31 Gaggles

- 8 Join successor group

- 25 Soft wool 33 Tonic

- 27 Geisha mixers

- 37 Energy



3-6

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.

3-6 CRYPTOQUOTE

BPO ZOKZOB CD RX VHDO HA

BPMB H PMEOTCB AMHI "H

VCEO XCY" CDBOT OTCYKP.

— XCQC CTC

Cryptoquote: THIS IS THE
PERFUME OF MARCH: RAIN, LOAM, FEATHERS,
MINT. — LISA KLEYPAS

Cruise ship Schedule: March 1 - 8 2025

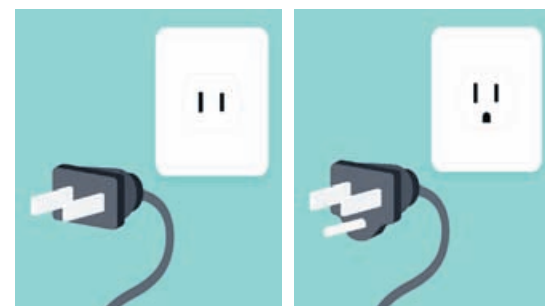
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SAT	01	STAR PRIDE	06.00	18.00	B	1
		THE WORLD	09.00	****	C	1
SUN	02	AIDAPERLA	08.00	18.00	B	1
		THE WORLD - DEPT.	****	23.00	C	-
		CELEBRITY BEYOND	09.00	21.00	I	1
MON	03	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE	08.00	****	B	1
		EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	18.00	C	1
TUE	04	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE - Dept.	****	21.00	B	-
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
		CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	21.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
WED	05	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	B	1
		AIDABELLA	10.00	22.00	C	1
THU	06	CORAL PRINCESS	08.00	17.00	C	1
FRI	07	NORWEGIAN JEWEL	11.30	20.30	C	1
SAT	08	SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR	10.00	23.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourists 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.



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Red Cross	582 2219

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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Jet Blue	588 2244
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FAVI- Visually Impaired
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Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



'Anora' Oscar win carries Academy Awards into a new era

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Last fall, Sean Baker was sitting in a Manhattan restaurant, talking about a poll. The survey, about sex in movies and television, showed that Gen Z moviegoers were mostly turned off by sex in film.

"That broke my heart. I thought, there's something wrong here," said Baker. "You're OK with all the violence that's out there? Sex



Samantha Quan, from left, winner of the award for best picture for "Anora, Sean Baker, winner of the awards for best original screenplay, best film editing, best director, and best picture for "Anora," and Alex Coco, winner of the award for best picture for "Anora," attend the Governors Ball after the Oscars on Sunday, March 2, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

is a vital part of existence. Why don't you want to see sex in our stories?"

"I remember being on set and being like: We're pushing against that poll."

When Baker's "Anora" swept the 97th Academy Awards on Sunday, its five wins, including best picture, heralded a different kind of Oscar winner. "Anora," about an erotic dancer (Mikey Madison, the best actress winner) who marries the son of a Russian oligarch, is atypically sexually explicit for a best picture winner a class that includes more staid movies like "The King's Speech" and "Driving Miss Daisy." A young woman's relationship to her own sexuality has not been, historically speaking, in the Oscars' wheelhouse.

But that's just one quality that makes "Anora" unique as a best picture winner. The film, made for \$6 million and distributed by Neon, was made with little interest in the mainstream. If anything, "Anora" was more oriented to the Cannes Film Festival, the French citadel of cinema, where it won the Palme d'Or last May a prize that Baker said meant the most to him.

But, increasingly, these are converging movie worlds.

In the last five years, four Palme d'Or winners have been nominated for best picture at the Academy Awards, including Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" (also distributed by Neon), which became the first non-English language movie to win Hollywood's top prize.

"Anora," a film that inverts a Hollywood fairy tale like "Pretty Woman," is like many of the winners on Sunday an unabashedly modern movie and a film comfortable, even proud of the label of "cinema." In a movie industry where manufactured franchise stewardship rules the day, "Anora" was celebrated, in part, because it's the real deal.

It's also a more traditional choice than it might seem. Baker, a filmmaker who has sworn off making a series, a studio film or anything for streaming, is an apostle of '70s cinema. At an Oscars that host Conan O'Brien called "the 97th Longform Content Awards," "Anora" which shared some of the same Brooklyn streets as "The French Connection" stood for upholding an increasingly threatened theatrical legacy, with Baker ardently defending a very old-fashioned thing: the big screen.

"Filmmakers, keep making

films for the big screen. I know I will," Baker said from the Dolby Theatre stage. "Distributors, please focus first and foremost on the theatrical releases of your films. Parents, introduce your children to feature films in movie theaters and you will be molding the next generation of movie lovers and filmmakers. And for all of us, when we can please watch movies in a theater and let's keep the great tradition of the moviegoing experience alive and well."

The coronation of "Anora" was a triumph for independent moviemaking, but that's also been a battle waged and won before. We've seen "The Hurt Locker" best "Avatar" and "Moonlight" defeat "La La Land."

Last year's crowning of "Oppenheimer" was, if anything, an exception in a string of smaller best pictures that haven't fit the Oscar mold. "Everything Everywhere All at Once," the 2023 winner, was antic, lewd and about the furthest thing possible from "Oscar bait."

What was different this year was that the stiffest competition for "Anora" wasn't "Wicked" or "Dune: Part Two" or any other studio product. It was "Con-

clave" and "The Brutalist." All of the major award winners on Sunday hailed from movies made independently. At the Oscars, the studios are out of the picture.

That trend has been developing for years, but the 97th Academy Awards showed just how much things have changed. In the best animated category, where Universal and DreamWorks' "The Wild Robot" was the heavy favorite, "Flow," a wordless Latvian movie made with open-source software, triumphed instead.

"Any kid now has tools that are used to make these now Academy-winning films," "Flow" director Gints Zilbalodis said backstage. "So I think we're going to see all kinds of exciting films being made from kids who might not have had a chance to do this before." That win, like those for "Anora," suggested the academy's international voters have emerged as a dominant bloc. When the academy, reacting to pressure to diversify its ranks, brought in new members in recent years, it cast a wide net overseas. Hundreds of new international voters people more likely to favor what succeeds in Cannes or Venice now significantly sway the Oscars.

What does that mean for the Academy Awards going forward? A further tilt toward indie and arthouse cinema will surely alienate some viewers. "Anora," with \$16 million in domestic ticket sales, is one of the lowest-grossing best picture winners ever. Oscar producers did everything they could to lean into bigger films, opening with a lavish medley by "Wicked" stars Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo, cutting repeatedly to a mascot sandworm from "Dune: Part Two" and even paying James Bond tribute.

The 007 musical number was oddly timed, coming on the heels of the franchise's creative takeover by Amazon MGM Studios after decades of Broccoli family stewardship. □



Marriott Aruba Surf Club PLATINUM SEASON

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Jets releasing wide receiver Davante Adams as new regime continues roster overhaul, AP source says

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.
AP Pro Football Writer

Davante Adams' reunion with Aaron Rodgers lasted just 11 games with the New York Jets. The team is releasing the veteran wide receiver ahead of the start of the NFL's new league year next week, a person with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The move, which was expected, will save the Jets \$29.9 million in salary cap space. It follows the team's announcement on Feb. 13 that they're also moving on this offseason from Rodgers, Adams' longtime teammate and friend.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Tuesday because the team didn't announce the move. NFL Network and ESPN first reported the Jets' decision to release Adams. Releasing Adams will cost the Jets \$8.3 million in dead-cap money, accord-



New York Jets wide receiver Davante Adams (17) reacts during an NFL football game against the Miami Dolphins Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

ing to overthecap.com.

Adams was acquired by the Jets from Las Vegas last October for a third-round pick in this year's draft. The 32-year-old three-time

All-Pro was scheduled to make a non-guaranteed \$35.64 million in each of the next two years. That hefty price tag made him a likely salary cap cut this offsea-

son, especially after the Jets' new regime general manager Darren Mougey and coach Aaron Glenn decided to go in another direction at quarterback.

Adams caught 67 passes for 854 yards and seven touchdowns in 11 games with the Jets. He also had 18 catches for 209 yards and a TD in three games with the Raiders last year, giving him five straight seasons with at least 1,000 yards receiving.

Adams and Rodgers were teammates for eight seasons in Green Bay, and the wide receiver said in January he was uncertain what his next step would be. He acknowledged Rodgers' future would "for sure" be a factor in his own decision, but added he "potentially" could be back with New York even if the quarterback isn't.

Instead, the Jets moved on from both. In a joint statement issued by the team last month, Mougey and Glenn said they met with Rodgers and informed him "that our intention was to move in a different direction at quarterback." □

Mavs star Kyrie Irving has a torn ACL and is out for the season, AP source says

By SCHUYLER DIXON
AP Sports Writer

Dallas Mavericks star Kyrie Irving has a torn ACL in his left knee and will miss the rest of the season, a person with knowledge of the injury told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Irving was injured in the first quarter of Dallas' 122-98 loss to the Sacramento Kings on Monday night. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because an announcement hadn't been made.

Following the injury, Irving made two free throws with tears rolling down his cheeks before leaving the

game.

The 32-year-old was fouled by DeMar DeRozan on a drive to the basket and his right foot landed on the foot of the Kings' Jonas Valanciunas. Irving lost his balance and then landed awkwardly on his left leg, and his knee appeared to hyperextend before he fell to the floor.

It's the biggest setback so far this season among a slew of injuries for the Mavericks, who lost 10-time All-Star Anthony Davis to a groin injury in his Dallas debut following the seismic trade that sent Luka Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers. The presence of Irving

was the biggest reason the Mavericks felt they could proceed with the controversial Davis-for-Doncic deal, a move that infuriated the Dallas fan base.

Now, Irving is out for the season, and would figure to be in the final stages of recovery when teams report for training camp for the 2025-26 season. Irving has a \$44 million player option for next season. The injury could make it difficult for the defending Western Conference champions to get back to the playoffs. Dallas is 10th in the West, the final spot in the play-in tournament.



Dallas Mavericks' Kyrie Irving holds onto his leg after suffering an unknown injury as teammates stand by in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings in Dallas, Monday, March 3, 2025.

Associated Press

Irving earned his ninth All-Star appearance as an injury replacement this season. He averaged 24.7 points and shot 40% from 3-point range.

Davis, who was to be re-evaluated this week for a

possible return, is one of three significant missing pieces on the Dallas front line along with centers Daniel Gafford (sprained knee) and Dereck Lively II (stress fracture in an ankle). □

The standard in golf is getting higher. That means scores should be getting lower

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The Cognizant Classic once had a reputation for some of the toughest scoring conditions on the PGA Tour because only one number for the score was required next to the winner's name. During a 16-year stretch from when it first went to PGA National in 2007, only seven players — two who were runner-up — finished in double digits under par. Arnold Palmer took notice. The King spent more than a decade watching the winning score at his beloved Bay Hill average 15-under par. Tiger Woods won four of those. One year he finished at 19-under despite spending most of the final round on his knees with the dry heaves from some bad pasta.

So in 2007, Palmer decided to convert Bay Hill into a par 70, turning two of the par 5s into par 4s. The winning score during that three-year experiment was roughly the same. Woods won in 2009 at 5-under 275, the same winning score he had in 2002, only then it was 13-under 275.

Low score always wins, no matter the number. And it's time to stop this fas-



Jake Knapp putts on the 18th hole on his way to finishing with a 59 in his first round at the Cognizant Classic golf tournament, Thursday, Feb. 27, 2025, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

cination with how low they go. The standard in golf is getting higher, meaning scores should be getting lower.

Jake Knapp did the unthinkable last week when he opened with a 59. Even more staggering was the winner, Joe Highsmith, who closed with rounds of 64-64 for the lowest weekend total at PGA National and a score of 19-under 265, another PGA National record. The culprit — or the credit for

those who prefer watching birdies — was overseeding the Bermuda grass with rye. It made it greener, prettier, softer. Of course, there was that small matter of not having enough wind to move a palm frond.

Whatever the case, it led to some guarded outrage lest anyone minimize a most excellent round put together by Knapp.

"It is a little disappointing," Billy Horschel said. "I'd say the condition of the course

is very scorable. But at the same time, you've still got to go out there, you've still got to hit golf shots, you've still got to make putts."

Jack Nicklaus watched the tournament unfold on TV and had no problem with it.

"Guys hit it further, the conditions are good, you got a benign day and guys can shoot a good score. That's OK. I like that," Nicklaus said during the Saturday broadcast. "If a golf course

won't yield to good golf, then I don't think it's a very good golf course. Now, if you have a day like we did Thursday and 3 under is the low score, then I think it's the golf course's fault."

Nicklaus speaks from experience, having designed some 300 golf courses and running his own PGA Tour stop at the Memorial. One year when Muirfield Village was dry and fast, Jon Rahm won at 9-under par. The previous year when it was soft, Patrick Cantlay won at 19 under.

Low score wins. And there's no doubt, scores are getting lower.

It's easy to point only to technology whether that's big drivers, solid-core golf balls or the modern agronomy tools — and overlook the science that goes into training players in the gym and on the range, allowing them to get the absolute most out of their games. It's the simple evolution of sport, and golf isn't the exception.

Swimmers and skaters have suits aerodynamically designed. Sprinters have better shoes and consistent surfaces. Basketball players are bigger, stronger and no longer wear Chuck Taylors. □

Katherine Legge to be the 1st woman in 7 years to compete in NASCAR Cup Series race

By **JENNA FRYER**

AP Auto Racing Writer



Katherine Legge greets fans before an IndyCar auto race, Sept. 15, 2024, at the Nashville Superspeedway in Lebanon, Tenn.

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Katherine Legge will become the first woman in a NASCAR Cup Series race since Danica Patrick in 2018 when the veteran makes her debut Sunday at Phoenix Raceway.

Legge will drive the No. 78 Chevrolet for Live Fast Motorsports. She becomes the first woman since Patrick made her final Cup Series start in the Daytona 500 seven years ago. Legge, who is a 44-year-old native of England, has five career starts in the NASCAR Xfinity Series. She most recently raced in NASCAR

at Road America in 2023. She ran the ARCA race last month at Daytona International Speedway. Legge has raced in multiple series over the years, including seven IndyCar Series starts last season. She has four career starts in the Indianapolis 500 and in 2023 set a record for fastest qualifying time by a woman. Legge will be sponsored at Phoenix by venture studio DROPLight and Sherfick Companies, a real estate and construction development business. "Entering the NASCAR Cup Series is a dream come true," said

Legge. "Racing stock cars has been an incredibly fun and new challenge that's given me a renewed sense of vigor for this sport. As always, I'm grateful for the opportunity to do what I love and am inspired by all of the effort, preparation and behind the scenes work it takes to get here." Legge is one of nine women to have raced in the Indy 500. She has four career victories in sports car racing and has participated in the Rolex 24 at Daytona. Legge has also competed in the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb. □