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A Senate vote to reverse Trump's tariffs on Canada tests Republican support

By **STEPHEN GROVES**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With President Donald Trump's so-called "Liberation Day" of tariff implementation fast approaching, Senate Democrats are putting Republican support for some of those plans to the test by forcing a vote to nullify the emergency declaration that underpins the tariffs on Canada.

Republicans have watched with some unease as the president's attempts to remake global trade have sent the stock market downward, but they have so far stood by Trump's on-again-off-again threats to levy taxes on imported goods.

Even as the resolution from Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia offered them a potential off-ramp to the tariffs levied on Canadian imports, Republican leaders were trying to keep senators in line by focusing on fentanyl that comes into the U.S. over its northern border. It was yet another example of how Trump is not only reorienting global economics, but upending his party's longtime support for ideas like free trade.

"I really relish giving my Republican colleagues the chance to not just say they're concerned, but actually take an action to stop these tariffs," Kaine told The Associated Press in an interview last week.

Kaine's resolution would end the emergency declaration that Trump signed in February to implement tariffs on Canada as punishment for not doing enough to halt the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S. If the Senate passes the resolution, it would still need to be taken up by the Republican-con-



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., right, listens as Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., speaks during a news conference regarding President Donald Trump's pending tariffs on Canada, at the Capitol, Tuesday, April 1, 2025, in Washington.

trolled House.

A small fraction of the fentanyl that comes into the U.S. enters from Canada. Customs and Border Protection seized 43 pounds of fentanyl at the northern border during the 2024 fiscal year, and since January, authorities have seized less than 1.5 pounds, according to federal data. Meanwhile, at the southern border, authorities seized over 21,000 pounds last year.

Democrats warned that tariffs on Canadian goods would ripple through the economy, making it more expensive to build homes, outfit military ships and pay for daily goods.

"These tariffs are a tax increase on American families plain and simple," said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York.

He argued that the increased costs for American households were being

done "simply to give a tax cut to Trump's billionaire friends."

Schumer said he agrees with taking on China "which really has hurt us in trade every step of the way." But the tariffs don't make sense for an ally whose economy is so interconnected with the U.S. economy. He added the tariffs are creating uncertainty with businesses and consumers.

At a news conference Tuesday, Kaine said fentanyl trafficking is an emergency, but that the emergency stems from China and Mexico, not Canada. He said Trump invented a "made-up emergency" to help pay for extending tax cuts that he said primarily benefit the wealthy.

"How are they going to pay for it? Massive cuts in programs like Medicaid and Medicare, and tariffs imposed on the backs of everyday Americans," Kai-

ne said.

Still, Trump has claimed that the amount of fentanyl coming from Canada is "massive" and pledged to follow through by executing tariffs Wednesday.

"We are making progress to end this terrible Fentanyl Crisis, but Republicans in the Senate MUST vote to keep the National Emergency in place, so we can finish the job, and end the scourge," Trump said on social media Tuesday.

Still, a few of Republicans have indicated they are considering voting for the legislation, which would need just a simple majority to pass the Senate.

Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, said she was still examining the bill, yet added she supported its "intent" because "Canadian tariffs are disastrous for the state of Maine."

"Canada's our friends and our ally, and this is not China we're talking about. It's

not an adversarial nation. It's our biggest trading partner, and this just makes no sense," she added.

Republican leaders in the Senate have signaled they aren't exactly fans of tariffs, but argued that Trump is using them as a negotiating tool.

"I think all of us are anxious to see — and we'll wait to see — what the president actually comes out with in terms of tariff policy tomorrow, but I don't think that should change people's vote," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., told reporters at the Capitol.

He added that the emergency declaration was made to "deal with the flow of fentanyl."

While Trump's close allies in the Senate were standing steadfastly by the idea of remaking the U.S. economy through tariffs, others have begun openly voicing their dissatisfaction with trade wars that could disrupt industries and raise prices on autos, groceries, housing and other goods.

"I'm keeping a close eye on all these tariffs because oftentimes the first folks that are hurt in a trade war are your farmers and ranchers," said Sen. Steve Daines, a Montana Republican.

Sen. John Kennedy, a Louisiana Republican, said he would prefer to see the U.S. and its trading partners move to remove all tariffs on each other, but he conceded that Trump's tariff threats had injected uncertainty into global markets. "We're in uncharted waters," Kennedy told reporters.

"Nobody knows what the impact of these tariffs is going to be." □

House Speaker Johnson fails to squash a proxy voting effort from new moms in Congress

By LISA MASCARO and LEAH ASKARINAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

House Speaker Mike Johnson exercised his power of the gavel Tuesday in an unusually aggressive effort to squash a proposal for new parents in Congress to be able to vote by proxy, rather than in person, as they care for newborns.

His plan failed, 206-222.

In an unprecedented move, the House Republican leadership had engineered a way to quietly kill the bipartisan plan from two new mothers: Republican Rep. Anna Paulina Luna of Florida and Democratic Rep. Brittany Pettersen of Colorado. Their plan has support from a majority of House colleagues. Some 218 lawmakers backed their effort, signing on to a so-called discharge petition to force their proposal on the House floor for consideration.

But Johnson, like GOP leaders before him, rails against proxy voting, as President Donald Trump pushes people back to work in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic work-from-home trend.

A procedural vote Tuesday tested who had the tally on their side: the speaker or the plan's sponsors. Nine Republicans joined all Democrats to sink the GOP leaders' effort.

"If we don't do the right thing now, it'll never be done," said Luna, who gave birth to her son in 2023.

Pettersen, with a diaper over her shoulder and 4-month-old son Sam in her arms, stood on the House floor and pleaded with colleagues to turn back the GOP leadership's effort to stop their resolution.

"It is unfathomable that in 2025 we have not modernized Congress," she said. "We're asking you to continue to stand with us."

Johnson had drawn the line against proxy voting as unconstitutional.

"Look, I'm a father, I'm



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., takes questions on tariffs while meeting with reporters at a news conference, at the Capitol, in Washington, Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

Associated Press

pro-family," the Republican speaker said late last month. But "I believe it violates more than two centuries of tradition and institution. And I think that it opens a Pandora's box, where ultimately, maybe no one is here."

It's the first time in modern House history that the leadership was taking the extraordinary step to try to halt a discharge petition when it's this far along. Next steps are uncertain.

Luna used the discharge petition process as she and others grew frustrated that House committees and party leaders were not bringing the proxy-voting proposal forward. Instead, she and others gathered the majority signatures needed, 218, to discharge it from limbo, and force it to the floor for action.

At a rules committee hearing early Tuesday, the GOP-led panel tucked a provision into the routine rules process that would have prohibited not just this discharge petition but any others that try to push proxy voting forward.

Rep. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the panel, said a discharge petition has never been halted before at this stage — a remarkable move from Republicans who often cam-

paign as the party aligned with family values.

"Given the chance to actually support families, they turn their backs," he said.

"A majority of the chamber is upending what the majority in this chamber wants."

Republicans countered that Luna, who led the discharge effort, did not go through the regular process of waiting for their resolution to be brought to the floor through normal procedure. And they criticized the temporary proxy voting policy that Democrats put in place during the pandemic that they said was abused by member absences. □

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Federal prosecutors to seek death penalty for Luigi Mangione in UnitedHealthcare CEO's killing

By **MICHAEL R. SISAK** and **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said Tuesday that she has directed prosecutors to seek the death penalty against Luigi Mangione in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, following through on the president's campaign promise to vigorously pursue capital punishment.

It is the first time the Justice Department has sought to bring the death penalty since President Donald Trump returned to office in January with a vow to resume federal executions after they were halted under the previous administration.

"Luigi Mangione's murder of Brian Thompson an innocent man and father of two young children was a premeditated, cold-blooded assassination that shocked America," Bondi said in a statement. She described Thompson's killing as "an act of political violence." Mangione, a 26-year-old Ivy League graduate from



Luigi Mangione, accused of fatally shooting the UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson in New York City and leading authorities on a five-day search is scheduled, appears in court for a hearing, Friday, Feb. 21, 2025, in New York.

a prominent Maryland real estate family, faces separate federal and state murder charges after authorities say he gunned down Thompson, 50, outside a Manhattan hotel on Dec. 4 as the executive arrived for UnitedHealthcare's annual investor conference. Mangione's lawyer, Karen

Friedman Agnifilo, said Tuesday that in seeking the death penalty "the Justice Department has moved from the dysfunctional to the barbaric." Mangione "is caught in a high-stakes game of tug-of-war between state and federal prosecutors, except the trophy is a young

man's life," Friedman Agnifilo said in a statement, vowing to fight all charges against him. The killing and ensuing five-day manhunt leading to Mangione's arrest rattled the business community, with some health insurers hastily switching to remote work or online shareholder

meetings. It also galvanized health insurance critics some of whom have rallied around Mangione as a stand-in for frustrations over coverage denials and hefty medical bills.

Surveillance video showed a masked gunman shooting Thompson from behind. Police say the words "delay," "deny" and "depose" were scrawled on the ammunition, mimicking a phrase commonly used to describe insurer tactics to avoid paying claims.

Mangione's federal charges include murder through use of a firearm, which carries the possibility of the death penalty. The state charges carry a maximum punishment of life in prison. Mangione has pleaded not guilty to a state indictment and has not yet been required to enter a plea on the federal charges.

Prosecutors have said the two cases will proceed on parallel tracks, with the state case expected to go to trial first. It wasn't immediately clear if Bondi's announcement will change the order. □

Associated Press

ICE admits 'administrative error' in deporting Maryland man to El Salvador

By **BEN FINLEY**
Associated Press

President Donald Trump's administration has acknowledged mistakenly deporting a Maryland man with protected legal

status to a notorious El Salvador prison but is arguing against returning him to federal custody in the United States because of alleged gang ties. U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement officials admitted in a court filing on Monday night to an "administrative error" in deporting the 29-year-old man, generating immediate uproar from immigration advocates.

Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia was arrested on March 12 after completing a shift as a sheet metal worker apprentice at a construction site in Baltimore, according to a complaint filed in federal court by his lawyers. Abrego Garcia was then sent to a notorious prison in his home country, the Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT, which activists say is rife with abuses and where inmates are packed into cells and never allowed outside.

He was placed at CECOT despite an immigration judge's ruling in 2019 that he not be deported to El Salvador because he had established it was "more likely than not that he would be persecuted by gangs," according to his lawyer's complaint. Abrego Garcia "left El Salvador when he was around sixteen years old, fleeing gang violence," according to the complaint.

"Beginning around 2006, gang members had stalked, hit, and threatened to kidnap and kill him in order to coerce his parents to succumb to their increasing demands for extortion."

"Although he has been accused of general 'gang

affiliation,' the U.S. government has never produced an iota of evidence to support this unfounded accusation," the complaint stated, adding that Abrego Garcia is neither a member of nor affiliated with MS-13 or any other criminal or street gang.

Abrego Garcia's wife later saw him in photos and video of him at the prison, identifying her husband through his distinctive tattoos and two scars on his head, the complaint stated.

The Trump administration said in its court filing that ICE "was aware of his protection from removal to El Salvador," but still deported Abrego Garcia "because of an administrative error." □



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Baltimore Field Officer director Matt Elliston listens during a briefing, Monday, Jan. 27, 2025, in Silver Spring, Md.

Associated Press

U.N. agency closes its remaining Gaza bakeries as food supplies dwindle under Israeli blockade

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAM MEDNICK

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The U.N. food agency is closing all of its bakeries in the Gaza Strip, officials said Tuesday, as supplies dwindle after Israel sealed off the territory from all imports nearly a month ago.

Israel, which later resumed its offensive to pressure the Hamas militant group into accepting changes to their ceasefire agreement, said enough food had entered Gaza during the six-week truce to sustain the territory's roughly 2 million Palestinians for a long time.

U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said Israel's assertion was "ridiculous," calling the food shortage very critical. The organization is "at the tail end of our supplies" and a lack of flour and cooking oil are forcing the bakeries to close, Dujarric said Tuesday.

Markets largely emptied weeks ago. U.N. agencies say the supplies they built up during the truce are running out. Gaza is heavily reliant on international aid because the war has destroyed almost all of its food production capability.

Mohammed al-Kurd, a father of 12, said his children go to bed without dinner. "We tell them to be patient and that we will bring flour



Palestinians receive bags of flour and other humanitarian aid distributed by UNRWA, the U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees in Jabaliya, Gaza Strip on Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

Associated Press

in the morning," he said. "We lie to them and to ourselves."

For the second consecutive day, Israel's military warned residents of Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah to immediately evacuate, a sign that it could soon launch a major ground operation. At least 140,000 people were under orders to leave, according to the head of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees.

Gaza's bakeries shut down. A World Food Program memo circulated to aid groups said it could no longer

operate its remaining bakeries, which produce the bread on which many rely. The U.N. agency said it was prioritizing its remaining stocks to provide emergency food aid and expand hot meal distribution. WFP spokespeople didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Olga Cherevko, a spokesperson for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said WFP was closing its remaining 19 bakeries after shuttering six last month. She said hundreds of thousands of

people relied on them.

The Israeli military body in charge of Palestinian affairs, known as COGAT, said more than 25,000 trucks entered Gaza during the ceasefire, carrying nearly 450,000 tons of aid. It said the amount represented around a third of what has entered during the war.

"There is enough food for a long period of time, if Hamas lets the civilians have it," it said. U.N. agencies and aid groups say they struggled to bring in and distribute aid before the ceasefire took hold in

January. Their estimates for how much aid reached people in Gaza were consistently lower than COGAT's, which were based on how much entered through border crossings.

Israeli strikes kill dozens. Gaza's Health Ministry reported that at least 42 bodies and more than 180 wounded arrived at hospitals over the past 24 hours. At least 1,042 Palestinians have been killed in the two weeks since Israel broke the ceasefire and resumed heavy bombardments.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 hostages. Hamas is still holding 59 captives. 24 believed to be alive after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals. Israel's offensive has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, including hundreds killed in strikes since the ceasefire ended, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't say whether those killed are civilians or combatants. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence. Israel sealed off Gaza from all aid at the start of the war but later relented under pressure from Washington. □

A fireball from a burst gas pipeline in Malaysia injures 145 people

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — A fireball that erupted from a burst gas pipeline soared into the sky outside Malaysia's largest city and injured 145 people as it burned for several hours before being put out, authorities said Tuesday.

National oil company Petronas said the fire started at one of its gas pipelines outside Kuala Lumpur. The inferno caused 20-story flames and a huge crater in an empty area near a residential neighborhood.

Health Minister Dzulkefly Ahmad was quoted by the New Straits Times daily as saying 145 people includ-

ing three children were injured. He said 67 people were still being treated at public hospitals, mostly for second and third-degree burns, while 37 others sought treatment from clinics and private hospitals.

The fire department said the fire damaged 190 houses and 148 cars.

Investigations were underway into the cause of the fire. Authorities said homes within 290 meters (yards) of the site will remain off-limits for now.

"There is a lot of damage across housing areas," said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who visited affected

residents and announced financial aid for victims. He told them the government and Petronas will be responsible for repairing affected homes, which could take months.

Some residents said they felt a strong tremor, and homes shook.

Lee Weng Ken, whose left leg was burned, said the ceiling of his house collapsed.

"I rushed out of my house but fell and suffered burns due to the heat from the blaze," he told Bernama.

Another victim who only wanted to be known as Andy told Bernama he ran

out of his home with his children when they felt tremors

and saw the fire about 100 meters away. □



A massive fire burns after a gas pipeline burst on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, in Putra Heights in Puchong, Malaysia.

Associated Press

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Mexico bans junk food sales in schools in its latest salvo against child obesity



A street vendor sells sweet snacks in Mexico City, July 5, 2016. **Associated Press**

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A government-sponsored junk food ban in schools across Mexico took effect on Saturday, officials said, as the country tries to tackle one of the world's worst obesity and diabetes epidemics.

schoolchildren, such as sugary fruit drinks, packaged chips, artificial pork rinds and soy-encased, chili-flavored peanuts.

Announcing that the ban had become law, Mexico's Education Ministry posted on X: "Farewell, junk food!" It encouraged parents to support the government's crusade by cooking healthy meals for their kids.

"One of the core principles of the new Mexican school system is healthy living," said Mario Delgado, the public health secretary. "There's a high level of acceptance of this policy among parents." Mexico's ambitious attempt to remake its food culture and reprogram the next generation of consumers is be-

ing watched closely around the world as governments struggle to turn the tide on a global obesity epidemic. In the United States, for instance, the Trump administration's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has vowed to upend the nation's food system and "Make America Healthy Again" by targeting ultra-processed foods to curb surging obesity and disease.

Under Mexico's new order, schools must phase out any food and beverage displaying even one black warning logo marking it as high in salt, sugar, calories and fat. Mexico implemented that compulsory front-of-package labeling system in 2020. Enforced from Monday

morning, the start of the school week, the junk food ban also requires schools to serve more nutritious alternatives to junk food, like bean tacos, and offer plain drinking water. "It is much better to eat a bean taco than a bag of potato chips," said Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who has championed the ban.

Mexico's children consume more junk food than anywhere else in Latin America, according to UNICEF, which classifies the nation's childhood obesity epidemic as an emergency. Sugary drinks and highly processed foods account for 40% of the total calories that children consume in a day, the agency reports. □

U.K. and Mauritius close in on deal over Chagos Islands after U.S. signals its consent

By **JILL LAWLESS**
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain and Mauritius are finalizing a deal to transfer sovereignty over the Chagos Islands, a disputed U.K. territory that is home to a major U.S. military base, the U.K. government said Tuesday.

The government signaled that President Donald Trump's administration, which was consulted on the deal, has given its approval and no further action is needed from the U.S. "We are working with the Mauritian government to finalize and sign the treaty," said Tom Wells, a spokesman for Prime Minister Keir Starmer. "Once signed it will be laid before both houses of Parliament for scrutiny and for ratification."

Britain and Mauritius have been negotiating a deal for the U.K. to hand over

the Indian Ocean archipelago, which is home to a strategically important naval and bomber base on the largest of the islands, Diego Garcia. The U.K. would then lease back the base for at least 99 years.

But the deal has faced criticism from the opposition Conservative Party and from some allies of Trump. Last year the now-Secretary of State Marco Rubio said it posed "a serious threat" to U.S. national security.

Trump indicated during a visit to Washington by Starmer in February that he would support the deal, saying: "I have a feeling it's going to work out very well."

Britain split the islands away from Mauritius, a former British colony, in 1965, three years before Mauritius gained independence, and called the Chagos ar-



This image released by the U.S. Navy shows an aerial view of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Island group. **Associated Press**

chipelago the British Indian Ocean Territory.

In the 1960s and 1970s Britain evicted up to 2,000 people from the islands so the U.S. military could build the Diego Garcia base. Mauritius has long con-

tested Britain's claim to the archipelago and in recent years the United Nations and its top court have urged Britain to return the Chagos to Mauritius.

Britain agreed to do so in a draft deal in October, but

that has been delayed by a change of government in Mauritius and reported quarrels over how much the U.K. should pay for the lease of the Diego Garcia air base.

The Chagos islanders, many of whom relocated to Britain, say they were not consulted over the agreement. Under the draft deal, a resettlement fund would be created to help displaced islanders move back to the islands, apart from Diego Garcia. Details of any such measures remain unclear.

Two Chagossian women are seeking to take the U.K. government to court over the issue. Bernadette Dugasse and Bertrice Pompe, both British citizens, fear it will become even harder to go back to live where they were born once Mauritius takes control of the islands. □

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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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Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Marriott's Aruba Surf Club bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.



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On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



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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 Cenotur 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, piccillilli mayo, fried onions, cilantro, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, avocado and a Maggi seasoning sauce vinaigrette

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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. □



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Blackstone Beach

(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered

in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day,

visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba: the stones that cover the 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! □



Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

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

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III.

Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower. The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two build-

ings 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.





Article by Etnia Nativa
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Quenching thirst in Aruba

Episode CCXCVII -297

Our narratives have long emphasized the vital balance needed in all that we do, especially on a small island like Aruba. For generations, we thrived with a laid-back colonial existence, shaped by a unique blend of cultures. However, the neglect of our cultural heritage and the growing threats to our biodiversity has reached critical levels.

This platform is dedicated to preserving and rediscovering native traditions, while exploring the true spirit of what it means to be Aruban and reflecting on our history and identity.

During this episode, we provide a brief historical overview of the evolution of drinking water in Aruba, highlighting its importance as a basic necessity for the establishment of human populations. Therefore, it is no surprise that, in arid regions like ours, people have sought ways to desalinate brackish or seawater to produce drinking water for centuries.

Before the establishment of the current seawater desalination plant, the native population relied on collected rainwater for drinking. They had limited access to natural fresh water, finding it in a few places such as caves where water leaked from stalagmites, springs like Loran, also known as Pos di Rey, located on top of a hill near Shette, and under rocks at Paraboste, among others.

Rainfall in Aruba typically occurs from August to February during the rainy season, but most of this rainwater quickly flows to the sea through dry riverbeds. In some areas, natives dug dams and irrigation channels, which were covered by vegetation such as Kwihî and other trees to prevent evaporation, like those at Tanki Flip. During the early colonial era, rainwater was also collected from the surface for use in homes and small-scale livestock farming.

While surface water can be abundant during the rainy season, it quickly dries up in the dry season, becoming scarce due to evaporation and absorption by the porous layers of the soil. Rainwater that filters through these layers accumulates in aquifers and underground channels, forming what are known as underground rivers. On Aruba's northeast coast, a small stream called Fontein flows year-round with crystal-clear water, in contrast to ephemeral streams that only flow after heavy rains. Historically, Fontein's



water was used for horticulture and later by a group of Chinese families who grew vegetables. However, the stream's flow has been hampered due to excessive dynamiting of nearby limestone quarries for commercial extraction.

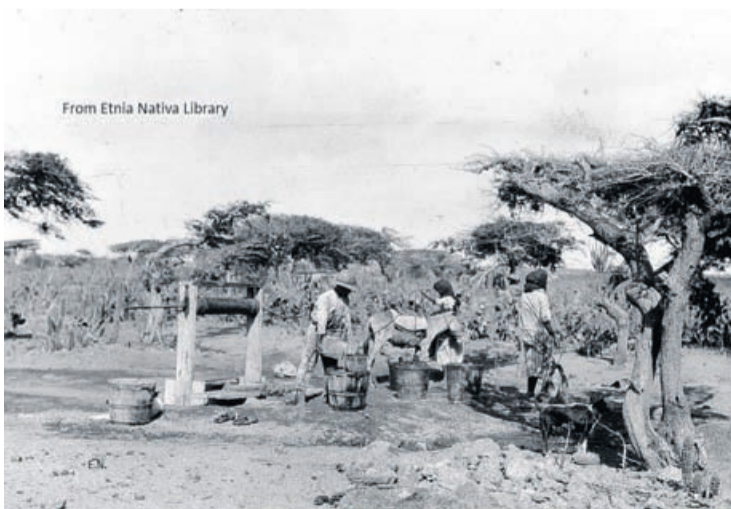
Wells of varying depths were dug by hand using chisels and hammers throughout the island to access groundwater. Due to the dissolution of minerals and calcium carbonates in some of these wells, the extracted water has a certain level of salinity and is known as 'brackish water.'

Water from the well was extracted manually using a wooden bucket tied to a rope. Later, windmills with wooden or metal frames were installed to pump water to the surface. Meanwhile, the island's early inhabitants, the Caquetio Amerindians, established their villages in areas where water and food were available. They would dig small holes near beaches to access naturally filtered seawater for drinking, a practice that became an art.

With low rainfall, scarce natural freshwater sources, and limited groundwater reserves, Aruba faced a significant water shortage for the gold industry following the establishment of the Gold Mining Company in 1899. This shortage led to the decision to build a melting plant in Balashi and desalinate seawater from the nearby Spanish Lagoon. During the colonial era, houses were built with cisterns to efficiently store rainwater, improving its quality for consumption and domestic use. At that time, peeled cactus plants were used as a natural coagulant or filter for muddy water.

When Petroleum refining company was established on the island, a solution was needed for both drinking and industrial water supplies. Initially, it was decided to import drinking water from the United States using special tankers. However, this system proved inadequate. As a result, a new water supply system was implemented for Oranjestad and St. Nicholas, distributing distilled and mineralized water—a system that had already proven successful in Curaçao. (Episode 216: Drinking water in Aruba) □

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From Etnia Nativa Library

If you really enjoyed reading our stories and are interested in interacting and learning more about our island's true identity, there is no better choice than Etnia Nativa—the only 'living museum of its kind in the Caribbean.' It's a fascinating opportunity, a trendsetter since 1994, and a co-founder of Islands National Park, the Archaeological Museum Aruba, and numerous Artisan Foundations, among others. Etnia Nativa shares valuable knowledge and connects you with the ancient spirit and soul of the island. We recommend booking a visit via WhatsApp +297 592 2702, as visits are private and by appointment only. You can also reach us at etnianativa03@gmail.com

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was

known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear



out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized

he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make

tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid

reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

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

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are

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

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors,



abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis. □

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

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



CROSSWORD

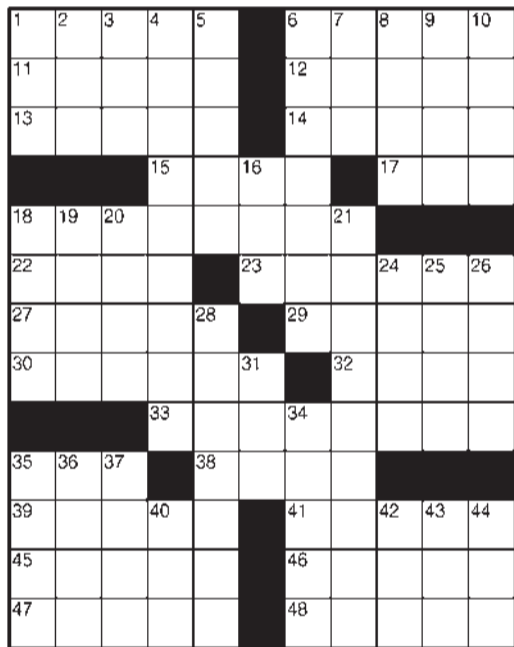
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Hawaiian greeting
- 6 Uttered
- 11 Seasonal song
- 12 Not dozing
- 13 School paper
- 14 Old photo tint
- 15 Historic periods
- 17 Finish
- 18 Nonsense
- 22 Corridor
- 23 Forces in the water
- 27 Hitter's turn
- 29 Razor sharpener
- 30 Tidy up
- 32 Moreno of movies
- 33 Typographical face
- 35 Vault part
- 38 Spur on
- 39 Perfect
- 41 Brother's daughter
- 45 Distress signal
- 46 Mosque faith
- 47 Scout shelters
- 48 Poker stacks

DOWN

- 1 Play division
- 2 —
- 3 Smelter
- 4 Diamond feature
- 5 Watchful
- 6 Feudal toilers
- 7 Need to pay
- 8 Matador's need
- 9 Related
- 10 Main role
- 16 Pound sound
- 18 Action star
- 19 Tardy
- 20 Jessica of "Sin City"
- 21 Culture setting
- 24 Rocker Clapton
- 25 Dorothy's dog
- 26 Reach across
- 28 Places of worship
- 31 Neither follower
- 34 Bar mixer
- 35 Schism
- 36 Not busy
- 37 Noggin
- 40 Gallery fill
- 42 Quarter-back
- 43 Beanie or beret
- 44 Print units



4-3

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.

4-3 CRYPTOQUOTE

LGO VRE MPO ZKMMZO CRTTKM
PORCV MPO TLE MOZZ PKB GRGGE
MPRM PO QRB CORZ. PO QRB
LUOCNLXO TE ZLUO KG PKB PORCM.

— "MPO UOZUOMOOG CRTTKM"
Cryptoquote: IN EVERY CURVING BEACH, IN EVERY GRAIN OF SAND THERE IS THE STORY OF THE EARTH. — RACHEL CARSON

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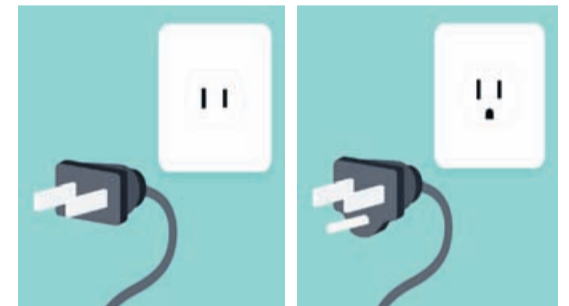
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	01	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	23.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	11.00	21.00	I	1
		LOGOS HOPE	****	****	E	-
WED	02	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	C	1
		LOGOS HOPE	****	****	E	-
THU	03	AIDABELLA	08.00	18.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN JEWEL	10.30	20.30	C	1
		LOGOS HOPE	****	****	E	-
FRI	04	NORWEGIAN PEARL	10.00	22.00	C	1
		LOGOS HOPE	****	****	E	-
SAT	05	EXPLORER OF THE SEAS	16.30	****	C	1
		LOGOS HOPE	****	****	E	-
SUN	06	RESILIENT LADY	08.00	23.59	B	1
		EXPLORER OF THE SEAS - dept.	****	23.00	C	-
		OCEANIA SIRENA	11.00	21.00	I	1
		LOGOS HOPE	****	****	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power

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



Drinking water

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



Supermarket hours

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



Safety

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



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3 assets that may not diversify as well as you think

Amy Arnott of Morningstar Diversification is a core principle of sound investing: A portfolio that includes assets with different performance characteristics often leads to better risk-adjusted returns than one that relies on a single asset class.

But building a diversified portfolio can be easier in theory than practice, as many asset classes often touted as good portfolio diversifiers may not live up

to their reputation.

Real estate

In some past periods, real estate investment trusts didn't move closely in tandem with the broader US equity market.

Rolling three-year correlations have dropped as low as 0.10 during some periods, such as the early 2000s. And being un tethered to the overall equity market can lead to better risk-adjusted returns when real estate is added to a diversified portfolio.

In recent years, however, real estate has generally moved more in line with stocks overall. This has also made it a less valuable cushion against bear-market declines.

Real estate had previously held up better than the overall market during some market corrections, such as the tech-stock correction that started in early 2000. But during the three most recent bear markets,



This Oct. 24, 2016 file photo shows dollar bills in New York. Associated Press

real estate suffered heavier-than-average losses.

High-yield bonds
High-yield bonds (also known as junk bonds) are issued by corporations with below-average credit ratings, generally defined as BB+ or lower from a major credit rating agency. As a result, they tend to

trade more in line with broad credit markets, overall economic trends, and company-specific factors than they do with Treasuries. As a result, they're less sensitive to interest-rate movements than investment-grade bonds, which means they can provide diversification benefits

within the bond portion of a portfolio.

At the same time, though, high-yield bonds have a relatively high correlation with stocks. They typically suffer during periods of weaker economic growth, which are also negative for stocks.

Granted, high-yield bonds have historically provided some protection from market drawdowns. However, Treasuries have done a much better job of cushioning downside risk.

Cryptocurrency

As an asset that exists purely in digital form, cryptocurrency is fundamentally different from other major asset classes.

Bitcoin still accounts for most of the investor interest and assets, but numerous digital currencies have also attracted more attention from both retail and institutional investors over the past couple of years. □



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Restaurant chain Hooters goes bust and files for bankruptcy protection

By **ELAINE KURTENBACH and DEE-ANN DURBIN**
AP Business Writer
Hooters is going bust.

The U.S. restaurant chain, known for chicken wings and its skimpy "Hooters Girls" wait-staff outfits, has filed for bankruptcy protection. HOA Restaurant Group filed the motion for Chapter 11 protection Monday in the North Texas Bankruptcy Court in Dallas. It's the latest legacy restaurant chain to run into financial trouble amid high food and labor prices, changing customer tastes and growing competition from newer casual chains like Shake Shack.

Red Lobster, TGI Fridays and Buca di Beppo all filed for bankruptcy protection last year, while the Tex-Mex chain On the Border filed for bankruptcy protection last month.

Under the Hooters bankruptcy plan, 100 company-owned U.S. restaurants would get sold to a group of Hooters franchisees. The



Chinese waitresses dressed in orange shorts and t-shirts cheers while welcoming the arriving guests at the Hooters restaurant in Beijing, China, Sept. 10, 2007. Associated Press

franchisees, who include Hooters' founders, currently operate 14 of the 30 highest-volume Hooters restaurants in the U.S., the company said.

"For many years now, the Hooters brand has been owned by private equity firms and other groups with no history or experience with the Hooters brand," Neil Kiefer, CEO of the franchise group Hooters Inc., said in a statement. "As a

result of these transactions, the Hooters brand will once again be in the hands of highly experienced Hooters franchisees and we will be well-positioned to return this iconic brand to its historic success."

Hooters said franchisees or licensing partners would continue to operate all existing locations, including those outside the U.S. There are more than 420 Hooters restaurants in 29 countries.

Hooters, based in Atlanta, Georgia, was founded in Clearwater, Florida, in 1983 by six businessmen with no food service experience who claimed they wanted to run a restaurant they couldn't get kicked out of. But its business strategy has faced challenges over the years, including lawsuits over hiring only "Hooters Girls" to serve customers. In 2017, the company tried opening a restaurant that didn't feature servers in tight tops as a test of a different approach to its original concept.

Last year, Hooters agreed to pay \$250,000 to settle a race and color discrimination lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. According to the lawsuit, a Hooters in North Carolina laid off 43 employees during the COVID pandemic, but recalled primarily white employees and Black employees with lighter skin tones once it began rehiring workers. □

As the Celtics near NBA record for 3s in a season, a look inside the numbers from beyond the arc

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

The Boston Celtics almost certainly will connect on a history-making 3-pointer sometime this week. It's likely to happen Wednesday against the Miami Heat. If not, then it'll be Friday against the Phoenix Suns.

It's coming. It's inevitable. This year's Celtics the defending NBA champions will go into the playoffs having set league records for 3-pointers made and 3-pointers attempted in a season.

Everybody knows the Celtics shoot a ton of 3-pointers; they have taken at least 50 3s in a game 36 times this season and they're a whopping 29-7 in those games after trying 62 of them in a win over Memphis on Monday night.

"It's just a matter of taking what the defense gives you," coach Joe Mazzulla said.

The Celtics are the first team in NBA history to take 60 3s in a game five times in the same season. They're up to 1,344 made 3s this season, now just 19 away from matching the record Golden State set two seasons ago so that's within realistic reach against the Heat on Wednesday. They've



Boston Celtics players on the team bench celebrate a made 3-pointer by Celtics center Kristaps Porzingis (8) during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Phoenix Suns Wednesday, March 26, 2025, in Phoenix.

tried 3,636 3s this season, 85 away from the record Houston set in 2018-19.

This has been a talking point in the league for years. How many 3s are too many 3s?

The Celtics don't care. Evidently, neither do about half of the other teams in the NBA.

Boston is one of 15 clubs poised this season to break franchise records in 3-pointers made, 3-pointers attempted or both. Some teams Chicago, Cleve-

land, Portland and San Antonio already have set one or both of those club records with two weeks left in the season.

Let's take a look inside the numbers:

The league will set a 3-point record. Again.

Now past 30,000 made 3s for the fourth consecutive season James Harden made the 30,000th on Sunday the NBA is on pace to smash the current total records for 3-pointers made and attempted in a sea-

son.

The league record of 31,579 made 3s was set last season and the record of 86,535 attempted was set in the 2021-22 season. At the current pace, 33,000 made 3s is within reach and 92,000 of them getting attempted isn't impossible either.

It'll be the 17th time in the last 22 seasons that the NBA has seen more 3s than ever before.

Teams are trying 6.8% more 3-pointers, on average, than they did last season.

This would be the biggest year-over-year jump in the last six seasons.

Translation: The 3-point craze is not ending anytime soon.

Half the league's teams will break marks

If you've paid any attention this season, you know this isn't just the Celtics going wild from deep. Almost every team is shooting 3s at a dizzying rate with Chicago simply obliterating its team record.

The Bulls had never made more than 941 3s in a season; they're already at 1,171 this season. They're on pace for massive increases over last season up 36% in 3s made, up 32% in 3s attempted.

Also currently on pace to break club records for 3s made, attempted or both in a season: Boston, Brooklyn, Charlotte, Cleveland, Detroit, the Los Angeles Lakers, Memphis, Miami, Minnesota, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio and Washington.

It's not for everyone. Houston is on pace for the eighth-most 3s made and attempted in a season; to be fair, the Rockets of a few years ago were of the go-go-go, shoot-shoot-shoot mold, and this team is not. □

Associated Press

Steelers owner Art Rooney II sees 'positive signs' that Aaron Rodgers will join the team

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Steelers owner Art Rooney II says there are "positive signs" that Aaron Rodgers will play in Pittsburgh. The four-time NFL MVP worked out recently with new Steelers wide receiver DK Metcalf after previously visiting the team.

"We keep hearing that he's heading in our direction so that seems to be all signs are positive so far," Rooney told reporters at the NFL meetings on Tuesday.

Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said Monday that he's staying in touch with Rodgers and is comfortable with Mason Rudolph as the starting quarterback.

"That's why we brought him back," Tomlin said. "I'm comfortable with that. And we've been there before."

The Steelers allowed Russell Wilson (Gi-

ants) and Justin Fields (Jets) to leave in free agency and brought back Rudolph. Pittsburgh hasn't won a playoff game since reaching the AFC title game following the 2016 season.

The Steelers hold the 21st overall pick in the draft. Mississippi quarterback Jaxson Dart is a possibility whether the 41-year-old Rodgers signs with the team or not.

Rodgers is a free agent for the first time in his 20-year career.

He could be contemplating retirement, signing with the Steelers or waiting for the Minnesota Vikings to express interest. The Vikings seem to ready to go with J.J. McCarthy.

"Didn't envision it taking this long," Rooney said about waiting on Rodgers.

He added they'll wait a little longer, but "not forever." □



New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers runs onto the field before an NFL football game against the Miami Dolphins, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025, in East Rutherford, N.J.

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The Masters goes on without Tiger Woods. No joke



Tiger Woods walks to the green on the fifth hole during final round at the Masters golf tournament at Augusta National Golf Club Sunday, April 14, 2024, in Augusta, Ga.

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

Tiger Woods can't get back to golf soon enough. Anything to keep him off social media.

First came words rarely heard from Woods "Love is in the air" in his social media post last week confirming he was in a relationship with the former daughter-in-law of President Donald Trump, accompanied by a two photos, one of them snuggling on a hammock.

More confounding, of course, was posting the photos along with a plea for privacy. But that was right out of his playbook from a decade ago when he was dating skiing great Lindsey Vonn. Provide proof (photos) to devalue and discourage the paparazzi.

Tuesday brought something new from Woods an April Fools' Day joke.

"I can't believe I am saying this," Woods wrote on X, another phrase he rarely

uses, "but a few weeks after rupturing my left Achilles, the sleeping in a hyperbaric chamber plus the explosive lifts my doctors and trainers have me ready to play the Masters next week! Can't wait! See y'all on the course." He waited six minutes before clarifying that yes, that was a joke.

"My Achilles is still a mess," he wrote.

That so many people fell for it is largely an example of social media destroying brain cells and partly because so many still hold out hope for his return.

Bernhard Langer had a tear in his Achilles tendon and remarkably made it back to the PGA Tour Champions in three months, although he used a cart. Woods said this was a rupture, meaning 2025 will be another lost year in the majors, the only tournaments he still plays.

Besides, what is anyone hoping to see?

Between the hardware hold-

ing his right leg and ankle together, a sixth surgery on his lower back, a ruptured Achilles tendon and a birth certificate that shows him turning 50 at the end of the year, the future is as cloudy as the forecast for Augusta National next week.

And it's been that way for some time.

In the five years since golf returned from the pandemic-caused shutdown — that includes a full year in 2021 when Woods suffered severe leg injuries from his car crash outside Los Angeles he has played 18 tournaments and has not finished closer than 12 shots of the winner in the 11 times he managed to get in 72 holes.

His greatest feat was making the cut at the Masters last year for a record 24th time in a row. Woods has never missed the weekend at Augusta National as a pro.

No doubt, that first full week in April for golf has become synonymous with yellow jas-

mine, pink azaleas, white dogwoods and a red shirt on Sunday.

Woods at a Augusta National is special. Always will be.

Gene Sarazen, who put the Masters on the map in 1935 with his famous "shot heard 'round the world" when he holed out from the 15th fairway for an albatross, made his last cut at age 61 and played until he was 71, then became an honorary starter until he died.

Sarazen was 90 when he told this gem of a conversation with the Masters chairman: "I told Hord Hardin I was getting too old to play in the Masters, but he kept saying: 'Gene, they don't want to see you play. They just want to see if you're still alive.'"

Woods hasn't been competitive in more than five years, but it's hard to imagine he won't be back. And if he is good enough to win a U.S. Open on one leg, there's enough cause for hope to see a little magic.

Would even one tee shot be enough to satisfy his fans? Probably not. Besides, being an honorary starter is not part of his golfing DNA.

Curtis Strange, a two-time U.S. Open champion who works for ESPN at the Masters, raised that prospect in a conference call Monday. "These great players, superstars, always talked about they never want to be a ceremonial player or something to that effect, like it's a negative," Strange said. "I want to see him at Augusta for a long time in the future playing. He's not going to play the way he wants to, but I think the people would love to see him."

It's too soon for that. Wait until next spring, when the "tradition unlike any other" includes tracking his private jet going to Augusta for a scouting trip to raise hopes and Woods holding a Tuesday news conference before the largest audience of media and playing a practice round with Fred Couples.

"I hope he gets back to where he can play. We don't even know if he can play ever again. It's going badly," Strange said. "But especially here, where he can come back and be comfortable and just be around. The people can't get enough of him. We can't get enough of him. "It would be sad that he wouldn't come back here and play in the future."

In the meantime, Rory McIlroy might have his best shot at finally winning the Masters green jacket to complete the career Grand Slam. Scottie Scheffler is going after his third green jacket in four years — no one has done that since Jack Nicklaus some 60 years ago.

Azaleas should be popping. The patrons will be roaring. The Masters goes on. But there won't be Tiger. No joke. □

Associated Press