No dark cars allowed in Turkmenistan

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

In Turkmenistan's capital, Ashgabat, drivers of black cars are facing high costs to repaint their cars white or silver after President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov banned black vehicles because he thinks the color white brings good luck.

Police began seizing dark-colored vehicles in late December, and owners have to apply for permission to repaint and re-register them.

The average wage in Ashgabat is about $300 a month (or 1,200 manats); one Turkman told Radio Free Europe that he was quoted 7,000 manats for a paint job, but was told that the price would rise within a week to 11,000 manats.

"Even if I don't spend any money anywhere, I will be forced to hand over pretty much my entire annual salary just to repaint," the unnamed man said, adding his black car had already been impounded.

COMPULSIONS

Bradley Hardison, 27, of Elizabeth City, N.C., achieved minor celebrity status in 2014 when he won a doughnut-eating contest sponsored by the Elizabeth City Police Department. (He ate eight glazed doughnuts in two minutes.) At the time, police had been looking for Hardison as a suspect in break-ins going back to 2013, so they arrested him, and he received a suspended sentence that ended in October 2017. But a doughnut habit is hard to break: The Virginian-Pilot reported Hardison was charged Jan. 18 with robbing a Dunkin' Donuts store on Nov. 21.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tennessee's legislature has a newly renovated home in the Cordell Hull building in Nashville so Lt. Gov. Randy McNally and House Speaker Beth Harwell have been busy outlining some new rules. "Hand-carried signs and signs on hand sticks" will be strictly prohibited because they pose a "serious safety hazard." Animals, too, will be turned away at the door, reported The Tennessean on Dec. 21. But in a dizzying twist of irony, McNally and Harwell will continue a policy they enacted last year, which allows holders of valid gun permits to bring their weapons into the building.

MY KINGDOM FOR A BURRITO

Tampa, Fla., resident Douglas Jon Francisco, 28, was arrested for DUI after he mistook a Spring Hill bank drive-thru lane for a Taco Bell. On Jan. 17, around 5 p.m., the bank branch manager noticed a driver passed out in a blue Hyundai sedan in the drive-thru lane. When the manager went out to the car and banged on the window, Francisco woke up and tried to order a burrito, according to the Tampa Bay Times.

After being set straight about the bank not serving Mexican fast food, Francisco drove around to the front of the building and parked, where deputies found him and administered a field sobriety test, which he failed. "He made several statements that were differing from reality," a Hernando County Sheriff's deputy reported.

-- A Facebook event calling for a candlelight vigil to remember a destroyed Taco Bell restaurant in Montgomery, Ala., started as a joke. But according to United Press International, about 100 people showed up on Jan. 21 to pay their respects to the popular fast-food restaurant, which burned Jan. 17 after electrical equipment sparked a fire. The owner promised to rebuild and "have a true celebration upon re-opening."

TAKE THAT!

In Dresden, Germany, police reported two men were injured Jan. 15 after hitting each other with their cars in consecutive accidents. The first man, 49, pulled into a handicapped parking spot, then saw his mistake and backed out, accidentally hitting a 72-year-old man walking behind the car. The two men exchanged information for a report, then the older man got into his car and reversed out of his parking spot, hitting the younger man. Both men suffered only slight injuries, according to the Associated Press.

FOOLED YA!

Montreal, Canada, machinist and cabinetmaker Simon Laprise, 33, took advantage of a recent snowfall to carve a DeLorean DMC-12 (the "Back to the Future" car) in the snowbank in the street in front of his home on Jan. 16. "I decided to do something out of the mountain of snow, to do a little joke to the snow guys," Laprise told Vice. In a "stroke of luck," Laprise found a windshield wiper across the street, which he placed on the snow-car's windshield. He missed a visit from the Montreal police, but others, who snapped photos, caught them looking perplexed at the "car" parked in a no-parking zone. In the end, they left Laprise a "ticket" that read, "You made our night." Sadly, the snowplow drivers weren't as generous, and Laprise's snow-car was reduced to the junkyard of history.

Send your weird news items with subject line WEIRD NEWS to WeirdNewsTips@amuniversal.com.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Unless otherwise indicated, county meetings are held at the Warren County Administrative Building located at 201 Locust Street and city meetings are held at City Hall located at 101 E. Main Street.

MONDAY, FEB. 5

The county Budget and Finance Committee will meet with Warren County attorney Stanley & Bratcher at 4:30 p.m. in consideration of opioid manufacturer litigation.

The county Safety Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. for an update on EMS and to consider a CDBG application for EMS equipment.

THURSDAY, FEB. 8

The county Economic and Agricultural Development Committee will meet at 5:30 p.m. to discuss an Airport Zoning Committee appointment.

Trooper discovers 47 pounds of cocaine in Dickson County

Nearly 50 pounds of cocaine was seized Wednesday by the Highway Patrol in Dickson County.

Tennessee Highway Patrol trooper Russell Bernard, assigned to the THP Nashville Interdiction Plus unit, stopped a rental vehicle on Interstate 40 in Dickson County near the 179 mile marker for a traffic violation on Wednesday.

Trooper Bernard spoke with both occupants and observed several signs of deception and stress. Nashville trooper Rhett Campbell responded to assist. During the stop, troopers discovered there was a possible full extradition warrant for the passenger, William Jones, 52, of Toledo, Ohio. The driver, Joseph Martinez, 54, of Toledo, Ohio denied the troopers consent to search the vehicle.

While waiting to verify the status of the warrant, trooper Campbell spoke with Jones and gained verbal consent to search his two bags located inside the vehicle.

One of the bags had 20 kilos (47.5 pounds) of cocaine. Both Martinez and Jones were arrested for possession of cocaine for resale or delivery and transported to the Dickson County Sheriff's Office for booking.

The warrant on Jones was verified after the arrest and he will be extradited to Ohio.

Agents with the Drug Enforcement Agency responded to the scene.

The case will be presented to the Assistant United States Attorney's Office.

TRAFFIC COURT

BY **DUANE SHERRILL**
Reporter for the Southern Standard (McMinnville, Tennessee)

Sentences were handed down Thursday by Judge Bill Locke in General Sessions Traffic Court.

Included in court action:

Crystal Rae Warriner was directed to serve 45 days of an 11-month, 29-day sentence, pay $600 plus costs and lose her driver license for two years for second-offense DUI.

Bobby Earl Jones was ordered to serve 35 days of an 11-29 sentence, pay $50 plus costs and perform 24 hours public service work for multiple offense driving on a revoked license.

Larry Wayne Morton was ordered to serve 10 days of an 11-29 sentence and must pay $50 plus costs and perform 24 hours public service work for multiple-offense driving on a revoked license.

Derek L. Marten was directed to serve seven days of an 11-29 sentence, pay $350 plus costs, attend DUI Class, perform 24 hours public service work and lose driving privileges for one year for DUI.

Robert Langford was given an 11-29 probationary sentence and must pay $100 plus costs for evading arrest and driving on a revoked license.

Luis E. Loera and Ramiro Loera were directed to serve 48 hours of 11-29 sentences, pay $350 plus costs, attend DUI Class, perform 24 hours public service work and lose their driving privileges for one year for DUI.

Fortunato H. Martin was instructed to serve 48 hours of an 11-29 sentence and pay $50 plus costs for second-offense driving on a suspended license.

Carlos P. Gonzales was granted an 11-29 judicial diversion and must pay $250 plus costs for simple possession of drugs and driving without a license. The diversion means he can have his criminal record erased once his probation is over.

Zachary D. Norris was granted an 11-29 judicial diversion and must pay $250 plus costs for simple possession of drugs.

Luis M. Chavez was given a six-month probationary sentence and must pay $50 plus costs for driving on a suspended license.

Oscar DeSantiago was issued a six-month probationary sentence and must pay $50 plus costs for driving on a revoked license.

Ismael Crespo Jr. was bound to the grand jury on the charge of driving on a revoked license.

Kayla Escobar-Sanchez, Marcus D. Garcia, Consuelo Del Santiago and Chelsea R. Parsley must pay $10 plus costs for driving without a license.

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