

Pleiades, the seven daughters of Titan Atlas

Pleiades, also known as “The Seven Sisters” and M 45, is an open star cluster located in the Taurus constellation at a distance of 460 light years from Earth.

There are two types of star clusters: open star clusters and globular star clusters. Open star clusters are made of groups of a few 10’s to a few 100 young stars loosely bound by gravity, made from the same molecular cloud and roughly of the same age.

They are located in the spiral arms of a galaxy. The Milky Way has about a 1,000 of such star clusters.

In contrast, globular star clusters are made of thousands to millions of stars bound tightly by gravity and

COLUMNIST



CARLOS ROTELLAR

they lie outside of the galactic disk. The Milky Way has about 200 hundred globular star clusters.

Pleiades cluster contains more than a 1,000 stars, of which only a few can be seen with the

naked eye between October and April. It contains clouds of dust and gas illuminated by the stars as they pass through the nebulae. Pleiades is about 100 million years old and it is expected to last another 250 million years before the stars disperse.

In the Greek language, Pleiades

means to sail. Ancient Greeks believed that the first appearance of Pleiades in the sky, before sunrise, proclaimed the start of the navigation season.

Pleiades, in Greek mythology, refers to the seven daughters of Titan Atlas and the sea Nymph Pleione.

Their names were Maia, Electra, Taygete, Alcyone, Celaeno, Sterope and Merope. There are several stories involving the “Seven Sisters.” I prefer the one in which Titan Atlas rebelled against Zeus, the king of the gods, who sentence him to hold up the heavens on his shoulders for eternity.

The sisters were so sad that Zeus

See STARS, 3C



CARLOS ROTELLAR

Pleiades is located 460 light years away from Earth in the Taurus constellation.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI / AP

Lane Belone poses with Pikes Peak in the background on an overlook in Palmer Park on Dec. 19 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

New year with a blind dog

I brought in the new year with a blind dog. She was seated beside me, wagging her butt. I think she could feel the energy in the air.

Everyone else in my house was asleep because they are – in the literary sense – massive party poopers. Thus, I was alone in the den except for Marigold, the blind coonhound.

Marigold had one eye removed. The other eye is dead. She lives in darkness. She moves by rote. When I turned on the TV, I could see her stepping carefully through the room, looking for me. Using her nose to feel the edge of the wall.

“Here I am,” I said.

I’m used to alerting Marigold to where I am. We’re all used to acting as her Seeing Eye Humans.

Marigold crawled upon the sofa beside me as I watched the TV-people with weird hairdos perform a countdown.

Times Square was littered with thousands of giddy people who you could have blindfolded with strips of dental floss.

And when the ball dropped, everyone on the screen cheered. My phone started blowing up with texts from loved ones.

But in that moment, it was just me and Mary.

“Happy New Year,” I whispered her.

Her tail began smacking the sofa, making a gentle “Thwat!” noise.

Then, she used her nose to trace the contours of my face.

Marigold will use her muzzle to feel the shape of your mouth, to see what your lips are doing. At first we didn’t know why she did this. Then we realized that Marigold was feeling our faces to see whether we were smiling.

The way we figured this out was, whenever she felt us smiling, her tail would wag. Whereas, if our mouths were slack, if we were not smiling,

COLUMNIST



SEAN DIETRICH

See DOG, 3C

UNCHARTED WATERS

Psychedelic therapy begins in Colorado, causing tension between conservatives, veterans

By JESSE BEDAYN
Associated Press/
Report for America

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — As Colorado becomes the second state to legalize psychedelic therapy this week, a clash is playing out in Colorado Springs, where conservative leaders are restricting the treatment over objections from some of the city’s 90,000 veterans, who’ve become flagbearers for psychedelic therapy to treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Colorado residents voted to legalize the therapeutic use of

psilocybin, the chemical compound found in psychedelic mushrooms, in a 2022 ballot measure, launching two years of rulemaking before it could be used to treat conditions such as depression and PTSD.

This week, companies and people will be able to apply for licenses to administer the mind-altering drug, though treatment will likely not be available for some months as applications are processed.

Colorado joined Oregon in legalizing psilocybin therapy, though the drug remains illegal in most other states and federal-

ly. Over the last year, a growing number of Oregon cities have voted to ban psilocybin. While Colorado metros cannot ban the treatment under state law, several conservative cities have worked to preemptively restrict what are known as “healing centers.”

At a City Council meeting in Colorado Springs this month, members were set to vote on extending the state prohibition on healing centers from 1,000 feet to 1 mile from certain locations, such as schools. From the lectern, veterans implored them not to.

“We have an opportunity to

support veterans, and it’s a really easy one to say ‘Yes’ to,” said Lane Belone, a special forces veteran who said he’s benefited from his own psychedelic experiences. Belone argued that the restrictions effectively limit the number of centers and would mean longer waiting lists for the treatment.

Veterans have pulled in some conservative support for psychedelic therapy – managing to set it apart from other politically charged drug policies such as legalizing marijuana.

See THERAPY, 3C

Killing of 18-year-old woman solved with DNA technology after 43 years

By JULIE CARR SMYTH
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A man who was shot dead last month as authorities attempted to serve him an indictment on federal gun charges has been identified as the killer of an 18-year-old Ohio woman in a case that had gone unsolved for 43 years, police announced Monday.

Mansfield Police Chief Jason Bammann said the cold case of Debra Lee Miller, a local waitress beaten to death with an oven grate in her apartment on April 29, 1981, was reopened in 2021 to account for advances in DNA technology and forensic investigative techniques.

“They examined the case as if it had happened yesterday, through an entirely new lens,” Bammann said at a news conference. “Their findings were staggering.”

The chief said a “firm DNA profile” of James Vanest, at the time Miller’s 26-year-old upstairs neighbor, emerged from evidence left from the room. Vanest had been questioned but never identified as a suspect during the initial investigation, which became mired in allegations of potential police misconduct.

Miller was one of several people from the Mansfield area whose suspicious deaths in the 1980s were examined for possible links to Mansfield police officers.

A special investigation ordered by the mayor concluded in 1989 that there was no evidence linking any officers with the deaths, but the report raised questions about sexual involvement between police officers and homicide victim Miller and about the way police investigated some homicides. The report noted that Miller wrote in



MANSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT VIA AP
The apartment building where Debra Lee Miller, a local waitress who was beaten to death is shown on April 29, 1981 in Mansfield, Ohio.

her diary that she was sexually involved with several Mansfield police officers.

The local police chief retired in

January 1990, after subsequent complaints arose over alleged irregularities in the investigation of the death of the ex-wife of



DEBRA LEE MILLER

a Mansfield patrolman.

Miller’s case was reopened several times during the ensuing years. This time, Richland County Prosecutor Jodie Schumacher

said the DNA evidence against Vanest was strong enough that her office was preparing a case against him for the killing to take to a grand jury.

But the case was never able to be presented.

Police had found Vanest living in Canton, about 100 miles east of Mansfield, in November 2021 and re-interviewed him about Miller’s killing. He had admitted to lying

See CASE, 3C

British rapper banned from driving for using phone behind wheel

LONDON (AP) — British rapper Stormzy was banned from driving for nine months on Thursday after admitting he drove his Rolls-Royce through London while using his phone.

The 31-year-old, whose real name is Michael Ebenazer Owuo Jr., is known for bringing the grime genre of rap into the commercial mainstream. His debut “Gang Signs and Prayer” won album of the year at the Brit Awards in 2018, where he was named best male British solo artist — an honor he won again in 2020.

His record on the road, however, isn’t good, a judge said at Wimbledon Magistrates’ Court.

District judge Andrew Sweet said that Stormzy’s actions were “dangerous and irresponsible.”

From Page 1C CASE

to investigators during his first interview in 1981 and investigators sensed this time that he was trying to create an alibi to account for his DNA being present in Miller’s apartment, Bammann said.

Mansfield Police Detective Terry Butler sought a second interview in spring 2024, but Vanest refused to speak and requested an attorney. Authorities said he subsequently sold his house in Canton, bought a pickup truck and trailer and fled to West Virginia. He left several firearms at his Canton home and was stopped in West Virginia with two more. He was arrested on state charges and released on bond.

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives took over his case and later indicted him on the federal gun charges. On Nov. 18, U.S. Marshals and Canton-area SWAT officers attempted to serve Vanest with that indictment at a North Canton motel where he was holed up.

“It is our understanding that when confronted by Marshals and the Canton Regional SWAT team, Mr. Vanest pointed a gun at them and barricaded himself inside the hotel,” Bammann said. “After a short shootout, one Canton SWAT member was shot in the arm, and Mr. Vanest was fatally shot.”

The chief said the department considers the case closed and hopes identifying Miller’s killer will bring her family some closure.

Butler said his great-uncle was one of the first officers on the scene of Miller’s killing in 1981. He said he feels fortunate to get the chance to solve a homicide that happened when he was just 10 years old. People should know, he said, “we don’t give up, we keep digging.”

From Page 1C DOG

she would not move her tail.

“I’m smiling, Mary,” I said to her.

She moved her nose to feel my tightened cheek muscles, just to be sure I wasn’t lying. I could feel her sweet little hound nose on my skin.

Thwat! Thwat!

And I smiled as I felt the old year slipping away. Like grime on your skin, rinsed off in the shower. I could feel the old year, the old me, the old garbage that follows me, the old way of thinking, the oldness of my own idiocy, washing away. Today is the first day of

the rest of my life. This means I have a chance to find meaning. I have a chance to tell my friends and family how much I truly love them.

I have a chance to make the act of living more important than the act of earning one. I have a chance to make memories with my wife. I have a chance to make space for new, unexpected friends who will alter the course of my existence.

But most of all, I have a chance to make Marigold’s tail wag harder.

— Sean Dietrich is a columnist, and novelist, known for his commentary on life in the American South.

From Page 1C STARS

allowed them a place in the sky close to their father. Sometimes you can only see six stars with the naked eye.

The mythological explanation is that one of the sisters left the sky after she fell in love with a mortal.

In the image you can see the seven sisters surrounded by blue reflection nebulae and at the bottom of the image you can see two stars. The smaller one represents the Nymph Pleione and the bigger one Titan Atlas.

— Dr. Carlos Rotellar is a Bowling Green nephrologist who has had an interest in astrophotography and has been taking images of the universe from his driveway for several years. Website: Skyastrophotos.com.



LYNNE BUCKNER VIA AP

Kings River pyrg, a springsnail found in 13 isolated springs around Thacker Pass, 200 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada in 2022.

Nevada lithium project could pose a threat to a small snail

By SCOTT SONNER
The Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — Opponents of the nation’s largest lithium mine under construction in 2018. Nevada regulators say they have no information so far that would confirm declining levels but have vowed to monitor the situation during the mine’s lifespan.

Without protection, Ruprecht fears the snail “will become another casualty of the lithium boom.”

The Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting a review of the snail’s status, but the agency declined to comment on the requests for an investigation into the groundwater concerns.

in late December that it was seeking comments on another proposed project in northeastern Nevada. Surge Battery Metals USA wants to explore for lithium in Elko County.

MONITORING GROUNDWATER

Ruprecht said reports filed by Lithium Americas’ environmental consultant with state regulators show the company no longer has permission to access private lands where several monitoring wells are located. That makes it harder to tell if flows have been impacted by past drilling, he said.

Nevada regulators say they approved changes in 2024 to the monitoring plan to account for the loss of access to wells on private land.

Prior data showed groundwater levels had remained stable from the 1960s to 2018. Construction started at the site in 2023.

The Bureau of Land Management’s approval of the mine acknowledged some reduction in groundwater levels were possible but not for decades, and most likely would occur only if state regulators granted the company permission to dig below the water table.

Lithium Americas spokesman Tim Crowley said it appears the mine’s opponents are “working to re-spin issues that have previously been addressed and resolved in court.” He pointed to 10 years of data collection by the company indicating the snail would not be affected by the project.

POISED TO LEAD IN LITHIUM PRODUCTION

Efforts to mine gold and other minerals in Nevada and other parts of the West over the decades have spurred plenty of legal skirmishes over potential threats to wildlife and water supplies. Lithium is no exception, as demand for the metal critical to making batteries for electric vehicles is expected to continue to climb exponentially over the next decade.

President Joe Biden made increased production of electric vehicles central to his energy agenda, and the U.S. Energy Department last year agreed to loan Lithium Americas more than \$2 billion to help finance construction at Thacker Pass. On Dec. 23, Lithium Americas announced it had concluded a joint venture with General Motors Holdings LLC to develop and operate the mine.

The mine 200 miles north of Reno is the biggest in the works and closest to fruition in the U.S., followed by Ioneer’s Rhyolite Ridge project near the California line halfway between Reno and Las Vegas.

And the Bureau of Land Management announced

NO WATER, NO SNAIL

Not much bigger than a grain of rice, the Kings River pyrg has managed to survive in 13 isolated springs within the basin surrounding the mine site. It’s the only place in the world where the snail lives.

In some cases, the tiny creatures require only a few centimeters of water. But the margin for survival becomes more narrow if the groundwater system that feeds the springs begins to drop, said Paul Ruprecht, Nevada Director for Western Watersheds Project.3

“Even slight disruptions to its habitat could cause springs to run dry, driving it to extinction,” he said.

Western Watersheds Project and the other opponents say the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is violating the Endangered Species Act by failing to rule in a timely fashion on a 2022 petition to list the snail as threatened or endangered. The allegations outlined in the opponents’ notice follow requests for federal biologists to investigate whether groundwater drawdowns are being caused by exploratory drilling and other activities and whether there have been impacts to the springs.

Environmentalists and Native American activists are demanding that the U.S. Interior Department address what they say is new evidence that bolsters their concerns about Lithium Americas’ planned open pit mine at Thacker Pass. The footprint of mine operations will span about 9 square miles.

The fate of the snail takes center stage after a federal judge and an appeals court dismissed a previous attempt by Native American tribes to get federal agencies to recognize the sacred nature of the area. The tribes argued that the mine would infringe on lands where U.S. troops massacred dozens of their ancestors in 1865.

Now, Western Watersheds Project and the group known as People of Red Mountain argue in a notice of intent to sue that the government and Canada-based Lithium Americas are failing to live up to promises to adequately monitor groundwater impacts.

They say it’s alarming that an analysis of groundwater data from a nearby well that was conducted by Payton Gardner, an assistant pro-

From Page 1C THERAPY

That distinction was made clear by Councilmember David Leinweber, who said at the council meeting both that marijuana is “literally killing our kids” and that he supported greater access to psilocybin therapy.

Psilocybin is far more restricted in Colorado than marijuana, which the state legalized in 2014. Psilocybin is decriminalized but there won’t be recreational dispensaries for the substance, which will be largely confined to licensed businesses and therapy sessions with licensed facilitators.

Patients will have to go through a risk assessment, preliminary meetings, then follow-up sessions and remain with a facilitator while under the drug’s influence. The psilocybin will also be tested, and the companies that grow them regulated by a state agency.

Still, allowing broader access to the treatment hasn’t been easy for most of the city councilmembers, including three who are veterans. Colorado Springs

is home to several military installations, including the U.S. Air Force Academy, and local leaders have touted it as an ideal community for retired service members.

“I will never sit up here and criticize a veteran for wanting to find a medical treatment to fix or to help with the issues that they carry,” said Council President Randy Helms, a veteran himself.

Still, he continued, “Do I think that it’s helpful to not just veterans but to individuals? Probably so. Do I think it still needs to be tested under strict requirements? Yes.”

The Colorado Springs City Council passed the proposed restrictions.

While research has shown promise for psychedelic drugs such as psilocybin and MDMA, also known as molly, in helping people with conditions such as alcoholism, depression and PTSD, the scientific field remains in its relatively early stages.

“I’m very positive about the potential value, but I’m very concerned that we’ve gotten too far ahead of our skis,” said Jeffrey Lieberman, a professor of psychiatry at Columbia

University, who’s been involved in studies of psychedelic drugs’ therapeutic efficacy.

The risks, said Lieberman, include customers being misled and paying out of pocket for expensive treatments. He also said there are cases where the drugs can exacerbate some extreme mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia.

In Oregon, where the treatments started in June 2023, costs can reach \$2,000 for one session. Of the over 16,000 doses administered in the state, staff have only called 911 or taken a patient to the hospital five times.

Other Colorado Springs city councilmembers raised concerns that the Food and Drug Administration has not approved psilocybin to treat mental health conditions and, in August, rejected the psychedelic MDMA to treat PTSD. A number of clinical trials are still underway for both drugs.

Some researchers, advocacy groups and veterans worry that waiting on slow-moving bureaucracy — namely the FDA — carries its own risks as people continue to struggle with mental illnesses. Advocates argue that

psychedelic therapy offers an option to those for whom talk therapy alone and anti-depressants have not helped.

“This is a crisis that we are in, and this is a tool that we can add to our toolbox,” said Taylor West, executive director of the Healing Advocacy Fund, which advocates for psychedelic therapy.

Belone said he’s carried his military experience long after leaving the special forces. It started when he first heard artillery sirens wailing in a U.S. base in Iraq, his breath catching with fear for a few thudding moments.

That fear kept him on edge when he returned stateside and found himself always keeping his back to the wall, looking for exits to the room he was in, never quite able to give himself fully to the music at a concert.

A psychedelic experience with psilocybin, said Belone, helped him connect the fear that attached to him in the war zone to the ceaseless anxiety at home. It didn’t solve everything overnight, he said, but it allowed him to better identify when that humming fear was getting in the way of a joyful life.



I love this town.

Ginger Cleary Ins Agcy Inc
Ginger Cleary Agent
1114 Lovers Lane
Bowling Green, KY 42103
Bus: 270-782-7276

Thanks, Bowling Green.
I love being here to help life go right™ in a community where people are making a difference every day.
Thank you for all you do.



1601485
State Farm, Bloomfield, IL