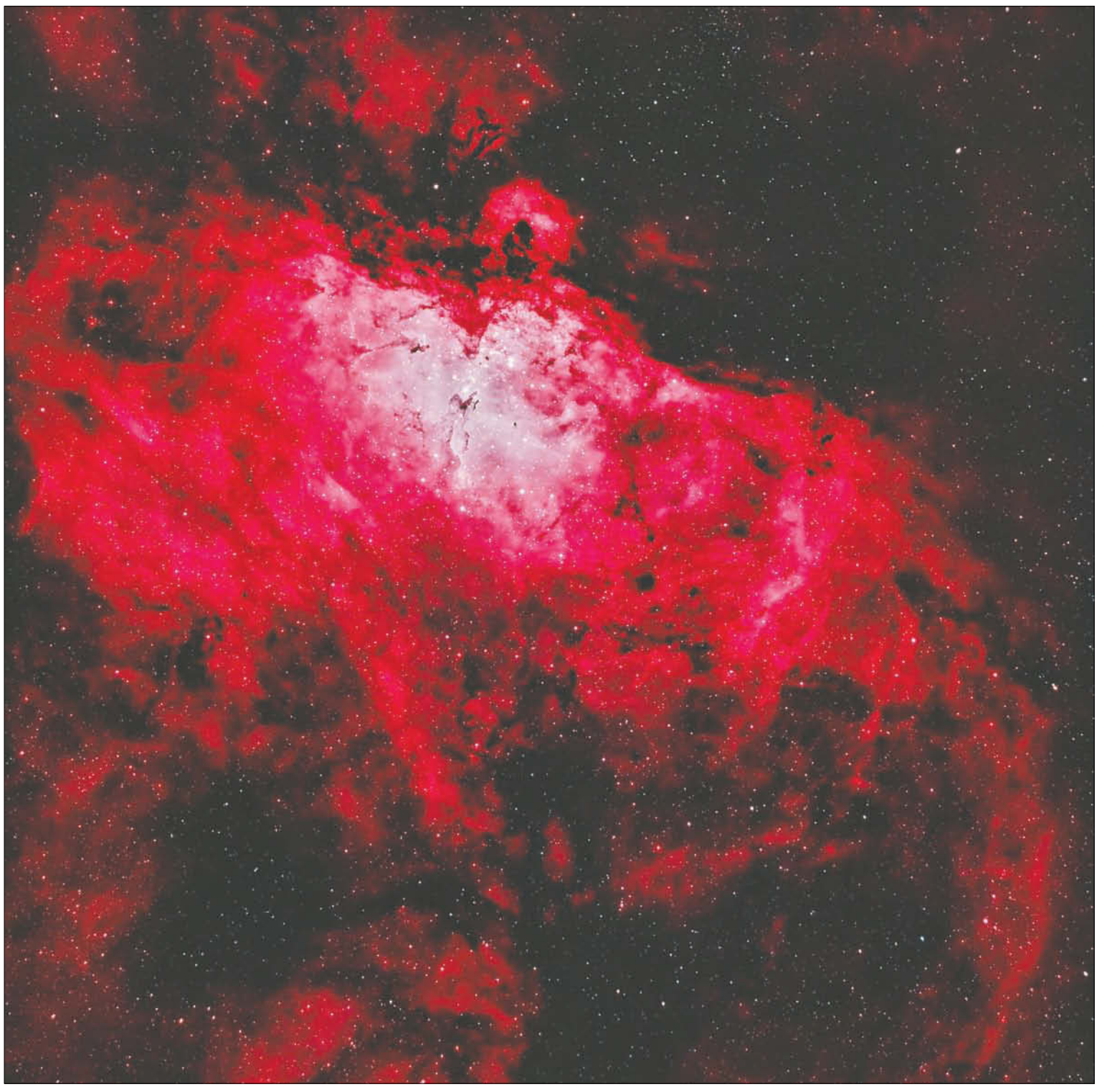
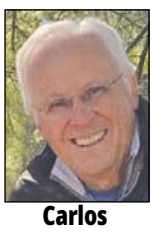


CARLOS ROTELLAR

Messier 16, or M16, the Eagle Nebula gets its name from its shape.

Eagle Nebula shows stars being born in space



Carlos Rotellar

Some of the most dramatic sights in the night sky are not stars or planets, but enormous clouds of gas and dust where new stars are being created. One of the most spectacular examples is the Eagle Nebula, a vast stellar nursery located about 7,000 light-years from Earth in the constellation Serpens.

Also known as Messier 16, or M16, the Eagle Nebula gets its name from its shape, which in photographs can resemble an eagle with outstretched wings. The nebula stretches across dozens of light-years and contains enormous amounts of gas and dust from which new stars can form.

The Eagle Nebula is a place where creation and destruction occur side by side. Young, massive stars within the nebula produce intense ultraviolet radiation and powerful stellar winds. These forces illuminate the surrounding gas while also sculpting and slowly eroding the enormous clouds of material. At the same time, gravity is pulling together denser regions of gas and dust, creating the conditions necessary for new stars to form.

The Eagle Nebula also gives us a remarkable glimpse into the past. Because its light takes about 7,000 years to reach us, we see the nebula not as it exists today, but as it appeared roughly 7,000 years ago. The photons captured in this photograph began their journey toward Earth thousands of years before the first Egyptian pyramids were built.

Hidden within the heart of this enormous stellar nursery stand the mysterious Pillars of Creation. Next month, we will take a closer look inside these towering columns and discover why they have become one of the most iconic sights in the universe.

– 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.

The Dropout and the Rail Splitter



Sean Dietrich

Hodgenville, Kentucky, looks like your all-American postcard town. Brick storefronts. Flawless Colonial houses. No flamingos in the yards. The kind of place where you'd expect to find Jimmy Stewart working at the drugstore soda fountain, and kids playing hopscotch on the sidewalk.

You might've heard of Hodgenville. Our sixteenth president was born here—or just up the road from here. Or just "down the road," depending on which way you're driving.

The Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park is the lifeblood of this town. On the town square you see the Old Rail Splitter himself, sitting on a Grecian throne, with a bronze stare. He gazes into forever with a hard and righteous glare. His stern face cracketh not a smile.

Most of the cars are going to the park. You can see the American tourists on the road. They have plates from all over. Texas. Oregon. North Dakota. I even saw tags from Alaska.

Abraham Lincoln was born inside a tiny log cabin located on Sinking Spring Farm, in the heart of the park. The cabin is still there, preserved, surrounded by a Parthenon-style stone temple. The cabin floor is still dirt. There is still mud chinking between the logs. There is still evidence that one of the nineteenth century's most notable figures was born here.

So why am I here? I can't really answer that. The short answer is: I don't know why I'm here. The long answer is: I REALLY don't know what I'm doing here.

I am here because in a few days, I'm going to be performing a concert on the steps leading to that childhood cabin. Open to the public. There, I'll be playing Lincoln's favorite music, telling stories about our sixteenth president's youth, and about frontier life.

I still can't believe this is real.

See **DROPOUT**, 11B

New study traces van Gogh's famed 'Starry Night' to an actual night sky from 1889

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Scientists doubling as art detectives have traced Vincent van Gogh's " The Starry Night " to a celestial scene that suggests a new date for one of the world's most famous paintings.

Their findings indicate that rather than being a product of van Gogh's imagination, "The Starry Night" may have been inspired by what he saw as he gazed heavenward from his French asylum 137 years ago.

A South Korean team reported Thursday that after years of forensic astronomy and research into the Dutch artist, they have matched his masterpiece to a predawn sky over France's Saint-Remy de Provence right around July 22, 1889.

That's a month later than the long-accepted time frame for the postimpressionist painting depicting a crescent moon and Venus surrounded by a sky of swirling stars with a village nestled below and cypress trees looming on one side.

Art historians have long dated the painting to June 1889, soon after Van Gogh checked into the asylum. He'd cut off his left ear several months earlier during an argument with painter Paul Gauguin.

A team led by Elijah Jeong-hyun Kim, the CEO of a Seoul telescope maker, is now disputing that date in a study appearing in the journal Scientific Reports.

The sky that is most similar to the painting occurred around July 22, 1889, said Kim, who is also a doctoral candidate at Kyung Hee University. He noted that the few days before and after could have inspired van Gogh as well.

"No two skies are the same. Something always changes. I believe Vincent noticed those changes and put them into the painting," Kim said in an email.

He added: "I am confident that July

See **NEW**, 11B



DAVID J. PHILLIP / AP

Visitors to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston view Vincent van Gogh's painting, "The Starry Night," on Oct. 17, 2003, in Houston.