

# Star light, star bright, star to blow tonight?

**United Press International**  
WASHINGTON — A massive star 9,000 light years away in the Milky Way galaxy has shown signs it may be heading toward an explosive death soon and would be so bright, it could be seen in broad daylight.

Dr. Kris Davidson of the University of Minnesota said in a National Science Foundation report released Tuesday the stellar explosion could occur any time — next week or 100,000 years from now. Either would be soon by cosmic standards.

The star is Eta Carinae — the largest star in the Milky Way and one of the most massive known in the universe. It is called a unique blue supergiant and has more than 100 times the mass of our sun.

Astronomers say that when it blows up, the star would release an enormous burst of energy — light equal to billions of suns and lasting a matter of weeks. Such an explosion, called a su-

pernova, is believed to occur when a star has used up all its available fuel and collapses. The last supernova to occur in the Milky Way was observed in 1604.

Although there have been suggestions radiation from relatively nearby supernovae may be responsible for climate disasters or mass extinctions on Earth, Dr. Nolan Walborn of Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in Chile said Eta Carinae is too far away to affect the Earth.

However, he says, when the star explodes, it should appear four or five times brighter than Venus at its peak.

Eta Carinae is in the sky of the Southern Hemisphere and can be seen only from Florida and Texas in the United States, grazing the southern horizon of the sky.

Davidson, Walborn and Dr. Theodore Gull of the Goddard

Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., said the key clue to the Eta Carinae's likely fate was the discovery that glowing hot gas, which spewed out from the star 150 years ago, contains much more nitrogen than expected.

Davidson said the nitrogen had to be produced by a particular set of nuclear reactions at the core of the star, and this happens only after a star has been around for a while. The nitrogen then had to make its way to the star's surface and wait to be ejected into space. This, he said, "tells us the star already must have lived through much of its possible life."

Although scientists discuss the star's fate in the present tense, Eta Carinae's distance from Earth means the light astronomers now are seeing from the star actually originated 9,000 years ago. It may already have exploded, but astronomers would not know it until the radiation reached the Earth.

# Arizona man trapped; still in Mexico cave

**United Press International**  
HUAUTLA DE JIMENEZ, Mexico — An injured American trapped since Friday in a 900-foot crevice in a cave probably will not be freed before Saturday, officials said.

Police said Tuesday it would take at least four more days to free Doug Powell, 22, of Tucson, Ariz., who broke his shoulder when he fell into the crevice as he was exploring the 24-mile stretch of caves high in the Sierra de Juarez mountains near the town of Huautla, 180 miles southeast of Mexico City.

"It's really complicated," said Jose Farca, of the Mexico City Police Rescue and Medical Emergency Squad. "They have to lift him through some passageways about a foot wide. But they won't quit until he's out."

The rescue team found Powell trapped in the narrow ravine Sunday after exploring the maze of tunnels and passageways of the five-cave system. Farca said rescuers would not be able to bring Powell to the surface before Saturday because of the rugged climb out of the 900-foot-deep crevice where he was trapped.

He said five cave specialists and a doctor from his squad were helping Powell. Other than the broken shoulder suffered when he slipped into the passage, Powell was in good physical condition, the doctor said.

Powell's father, Dr. Hasting Powell of Tucson, sent a Texas doctor and a spelunker — a cave explorer — who were working with the Mexican team, Farca said.

Capt. Heriberto Lopez Pineda, head of the Mexico City rescue unit, said police first learned of the mishap from Mexican cave explorer Alejandro Villagomez, who was with Powell when he was injured.

The caves, discovered in 1967, are 3,666 feet deep and

are threaded by an underground river that makes exploration hazardous except during the dry spring months.

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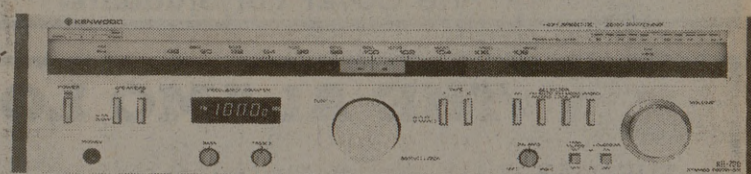
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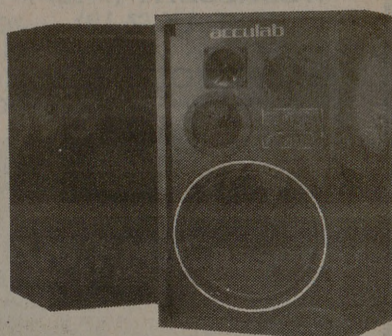
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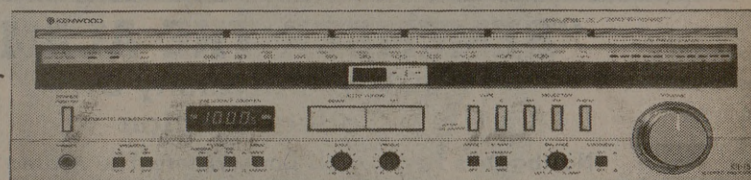
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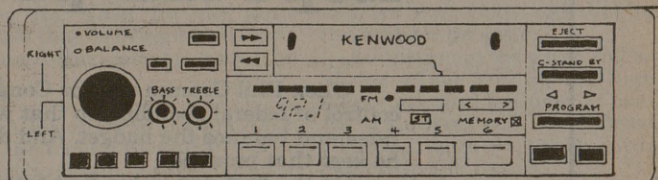
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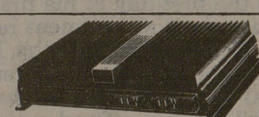
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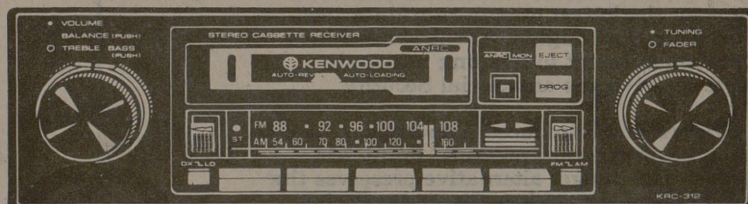


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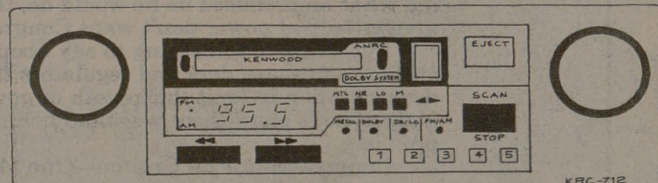
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