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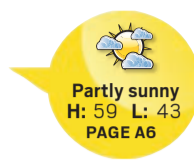
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# MONTEREY HERALD



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## HEALTH

# '80S PARTY DRUG USED AS A PTSD TREATMENT

Study led by UCSF researcher shows MDMA could help millions with the disorder



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JONATHAN LUBECKY

Jonathan Lubecky was deployed to Iraq from October 2005 to October 2006. Before his MDMA-assisted therapy, the now-retired Army sergeant says, he tried to take his own life five times because of flashbacks, nightmares and other PTSD symptoms resulting from his year in Iraq.

By McKenzie Prillaman  
newsroom@montereyherald.com

Retired Army Sgt. Jonathan Lubecky couldn't get the year he spent in Iraq out of his head.

Loud noises and people wearing backpacks triggered flashbacks, and he regularly woke up from nightmares in a cold sweat. He tried to take his own life five times between 2006 and 2013.

Afraid that his next suicide attempt would succeed, Lubecky signed up to participate in a clinical research study investigating whether MDMA, commonly known as Molly or Ecstasy, could help tame the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I thought it'd be fun to do and it might help for a month or two," said Lubecky, 45. "I was wrong. It's a f--- miracle."

The successful treatment of PTSD patients such as Lubecky

is catapulting MDMA and other psychedelics into the medical spotlight as promising therapeutic tools. Long stigmatized, MDMA is proving to be effective in easing PTSD in rigorous clinical trials conducted at UC San Francisco and other respected medical centers around the globe.

Although some scientists remain skeptical, a growing number of researchers say the treatment could potentially help the more than 300 million people worldwide who suffer from the psychiatric disorder.

"MDMA allows you to access these really deep traumatic memories in a way that is not anxiety-provoking," said Jennifer Mitchell, a UCSF neuroscientist who recently led a groundbreaking study on MDMA-assisted therapy.

Developed in 1912 by the pharmaceutical company Merck as a precursor to a blood-clot-



Rick Doblin, founder of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, and Iraq War veteran Jonathan Lubecky take a boat ride near the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor in November 2018.

ting agent, MDMA was readily available as an experimental psychotherapeutic tool in the decades that followed.

But in the 1980s, growing recreational use of the drug, particularly at all-night rave parties, led to its prohibition.

PTSD » PAGE 4

## POLITICS

# US pledges to put Russia on defensive at UN council

By Jim Heintz and Ellen Knickmeyer  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » The U.S. worked Sunday to ramp up diplomatic and financial pressure on Russia over Ukraine, promising to put Moscow on the defensive at the U.N. Security Council as lawmakers on Capitol Hill said they were nearing agreement on "the mother of all sanctions."

The American ambassador to the United Nations said the Security Council will press Russia hard in a Monday session to discuss its massing of troops near Ukraine and fears it is planning an invasion.

"Our voices are unified in calling for the Russians to explain themselves," Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said of the U.S. and the other council members on ABC's "This Week." "We're going into the room prepared to listen to them, but we're not going to be distracted by their propaganda."

Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., Oksana Markarova, warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin is bent on waging an "attack on democracy," not just on

RUSSIA » PAGE 3

## WEATHER

# After blizzard, East Coast digs out under sunny sky

By Mark Pratt and Mike Catalini  
The Associated Press

BOSTON » The sun shone down on much of the East Coast on Sunday, a day after a vicious nor'easter brought blizzard conditions to many areas, and left more than 100,000 customers without power for a stretch that could last into Monday.

Winds that had gusted to more than 80 mph on Saturday died down on Sunday, and temperatures climbed into the upper teens and 20s as people emerged from their homes to dig out.

The storm dumped snow from Virginia to Maine, but Massachusetts bore the brunt of the fury, with the neighboring towns of Sharon and Stoughton getting more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow.

BLIZZARD » PAGE 4

## POLITICS

### Clyburn pushes his pick for Supreme Court

At Biden's lowest in 2020, Rep. Clyburn suggested he pledge to appoint the first Black woman justice. PAGE A5



## CRIME

### Dozens of guns among stolen cargo train items

Authorities say handguns and shotguns were among the items stolen by thieves who raided LA cargo trains. PAGE A2

## IMMIGRATION

### Asylum aspirants pin hopes on Trump policy

The Biden administration extended a Trump-era policy making asylum-seekers wait in Brownsville, Texas. PAGE A6

## COVID-19

### Don't know how to make a booster appointment?

Visit Monterey County Health Department webpage at <https://bit.ly/3qtjYU0> for links to schedules and registration.

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