

# Snake River Skies

The Monthly Newsletter of the Magic Valley Astronomical Society.

May 2026

## Membership Meeting

May 9th at the Herrett Center,  
College of Southern Idaho main  
campus at 7:00pm

## Centennial Observatory

See Inside for Details

## Faulkner Planetarium

See Inside for Details

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Magic Valley Astronomical Society  
is a member of the Astronomical  
League



M-51 imaged by  
Rick Widmer & Ken Thomason  
Herrett Telescope - Shotwell  
Camera

Visit our Website  
[www.mvastro.org](http://www.mvastro.org)

## May 2026

Greetings Friends and Family: Another typical Idaho April - May, when the weather jumps from winter to summer and back to spring again. And no, I am not complaining about a series of 70 degrees days.

First off, just a note about our next two programs. Tim Frazier will be presenting our program for May, "Tim is planning to present an overview of our exploration of Mars. Beginning with a brief introduction of the history of Mars science and speculation, I'll touch on the discoveries our probes have made and what our future plans are."! That is on the 9th at 7:00pm in the Herrett Center Library.

Gary Leavitt will present our June 13th program. Also to be finalized at our May meeting will be the location and date of our long-awaited star party.

- By Dr. Jay A. Hartwell VP

This month, Jupiter and Venus shine brightly in the west after sunset along with the dazzling stars of the northern winter constellations on their way out for the year. Mars and Saturn make a return to the morning sky and slowly brighten in the coming weeks. The best meteor shower of the year for southern observers, the Eta Aquariids, is already going strong and peaks on May 5-6. For deep-sky observers, May means galaxy season as our night sky looks out of the plane of the Milky Way into the intergalactic void. And the month holds a somewhat rare 'Blue Moon', a second full Moon in a calendar month.

Who among us will look on the Moon the same after the spectacularly successful Artemis II mission in which four astronauts looped around its far side and travelled farther from Earth than any humans before.

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## Monthly Event Calendar - May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <a href="#">Full Flower Moon</a> 	2 <a href="#">Conjunction of Mercury and Eris</a>
3 <a href="#">Lunar occultation of Antares</a>	4 <a href="#">The Moon at aphelion</a> <a href="#">The Moon at apogee</a>	5	6 <a href="#">η-Aquariid meteor shower 2026</a>	7	8 <a href="#">η-Lyrid meteor shower 2026</a>	9 MVAS General Mtg. 7:00p at the Herrett Center. Centennial Observatory Star Party
10 Mother's Day 	11	12 <a href="#">Messier 5 is well placed</a>	13 <a href="#">Close approach of the Moon and Saturn</a> <a href="#">Conjunction of the Moon and Saturn</a>	14 <a href="#">Mercury at superior solar conjunction</a> <a href="#">Conjunction of the Moon and Mars</a>	15	16 <a href="#">New Moon</a> 
17 <a href="#">The Moon at perigee</a>	18 <a href="#">Mercury at perihelion</a> <a href="#">Conjunction of the Moon and Venus</a>	19	20 <a href="#">Conjunction of the Moon and Jupiter</a>	21 <a href="#">Close approach of the Moon and M44</a>	22 <a href="#">Uranus at solar conjunction</a>	23 <a href="#">Moon at First Quarter</a>
24	25 Memorial Day 	26	27 <a href="#">Summer Solar Session</a> at the Centennial Observatory 1:30 - 3:30pm	28	29 <a href="#">Venus at highest altitude in evening sky</a>	30
31 <a href="#">Blue Moon</a> 				On the 14th <a href="#">The Moon at perihelion</a> <a href="#">1 Ceres at solar conjunction</a> <a href="#">Venus at perihelion</a>		On the 9th <a href="#">Moon at Last Quarter</a> 

## Night Sky this Month – May 2026

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The Earth sets behind the Moon as photographed by the crew of NASA's Artemis II lunar mission in April 2026. Image credit: NASA.

A new view of the Sombrero Galaxy (Messier 104) shows the brilliant disk of this edge-on spiral surrounded by a glowing sphere of stars ingested when this big galaxy gobbled up dozens of smaller galaxies over the eons. [It's an amazing image.](#)

This month features a monthly 'Blue Moon', a second full moon in a single calendar month. Of course, a Blue Moon isn't really blue, and the term arose from a misunderstanding, but... well, [read this article to get the full story.](#)

And the astronomy quote of the month:

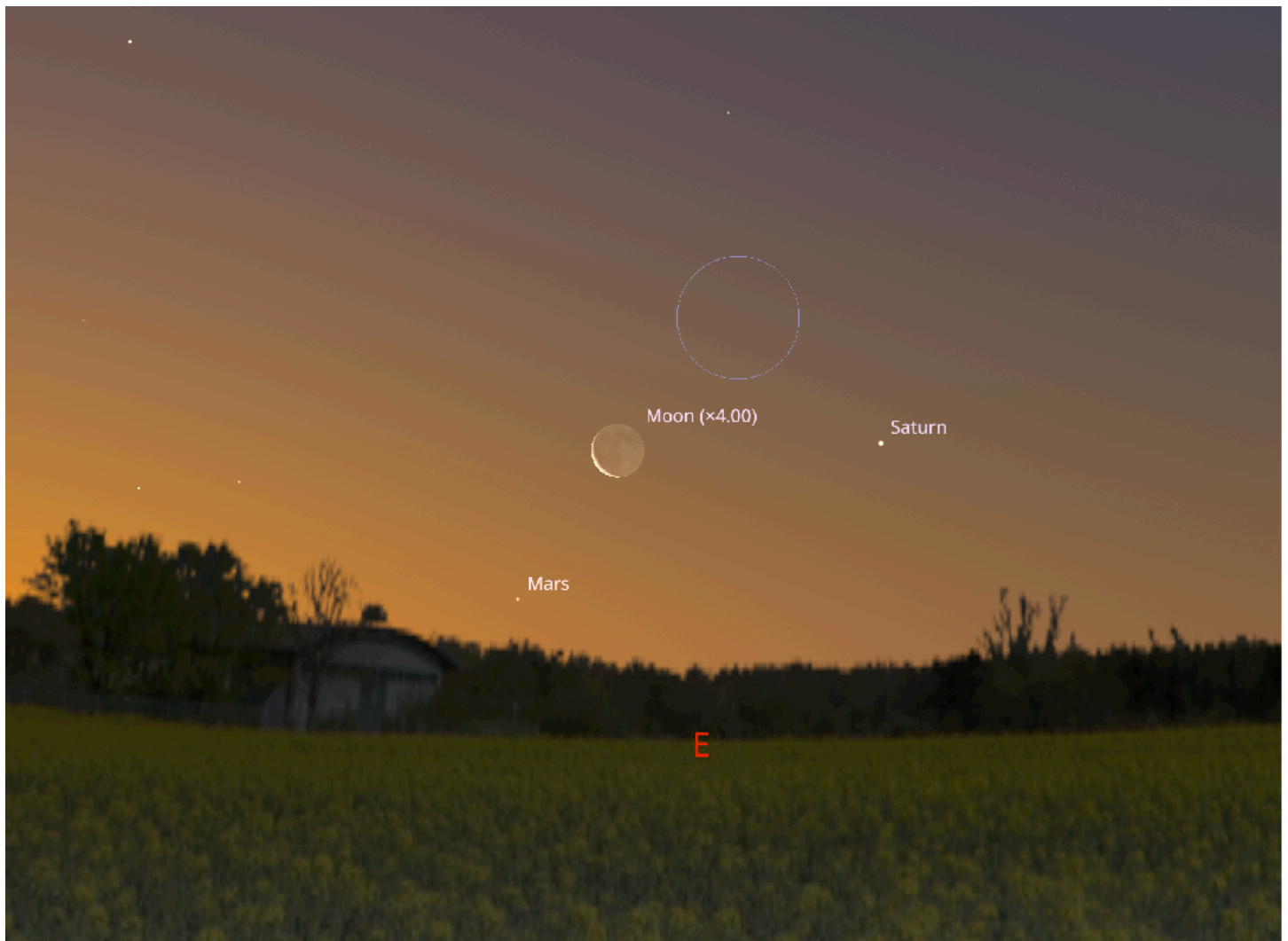
*"Though my soul may set in darkness, it will rise in perfect light; I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night."* - From the poem ["The Old Astronomer"](#) by Sarah Williams

**1 May 2026.** Full Moon, 17:23 UT (the full 'Flower Moon').

**3 May.** The fat gibbous Moon rises less than 2° east of Antares in Scorpius in the southeastern sky.

**5-6 May.** The usually reliable Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks. The shower runs from April 21 through May 20 each year, with many meteors still visible for several days on either side of the peak. The Eta Aquarids occur as Earth passes through a stream of icy and dusty debris from Comet 1/P Halley, more commonly called Halley's Comet. We pass through a second stream of the comet in late October during the Orionids meteor shower. Look for the meteors anywhere in the sky, preferably after midnight. They trace their paths back to a point near the star Eta Aquarii which rises in the eastern/southeastern sky before dawn. This is perhaps the best meteor shower of the year for southern hemisphere stargazers, but northern observers may see a few of these meteors too. NOTE: If you're clouded out, or too far north, you can always watch some of the shower on [the excellent live feed from the Subaru Telescope on Mauna Kea, Hawaii.](#)

The waning crescent Moon rises in the eastern sky along with Mars and Saturn on May 14, 2026.



**14 May.** Mars debuts in the morning sky and sits about  $7^\circ$  east of the waning crescent Moon in the east-northeastern sky before dawn. The planet is still small and relatively dim at magnitude +1.2. Saturn lies about  $8^\circ$  to the southwest of the Moon and shines slightly brighter at magnitude +0.9. Binoculars help you take in the view.

**14 May.** Mercury is in superior conjunction with the Sun.

**16 May.** New Moon, 20:01 UT.

**18 May.** A fresh crescent Moon lies about  $2^\circ$  northwest of brilliant Venus in the west-northwest after sunset on the 18th. Jupiter lies to the east near Castor and Pollux in Gemini. Both planets are brighter than any star – Venus at magnitude -3.9 and Jupiter at magnitude -1.9. The Moon moves between the two bright planets on the 19<sup>th</sup>, then leapfrogs Jupiter to lie east of it on May 20. These planets, the Moon, and the bright stars make for pleasant viewing on a spring night.

**21 May.** Venus passes  $0.8^\circ$  north of the lovely star cluster M35 in Gemini. Grab a good pair of binoculars or a small telescope to see planet and cluster together.

**22 May.** The half-lit Moon leads the icy-white star Regulus towards the western horizon after sunset.

**22 May.** Uranus is in conjunction with the Sun.

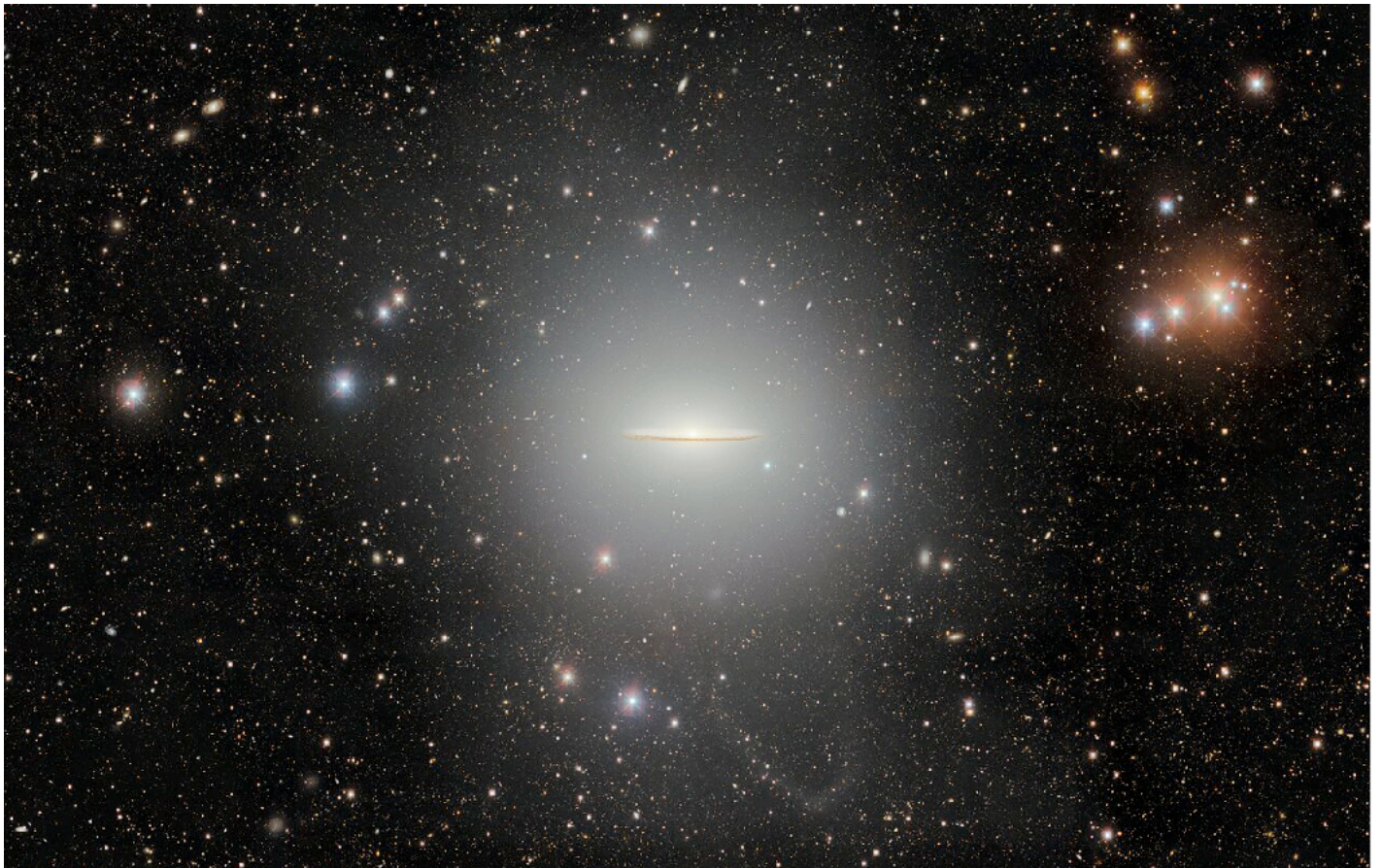
**23 May.** First Quarter Moon, 11:11 UT

**31 May.** Full Moon, 08:45 UT (a full 'Blue Moon').



The waxing crescent Moon with Venus, Jupiter, and bright stars in the western sky on May 18, 2026.

Below: Messier 104, the Sombrero galaxy. See link above.



# Herrett Center for Arts and Science

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## Centennial Observatory



### Upcoming Events

All events are weather permitting

Event	Place	Date	Time	Admission(s)
<a href="#">Monthly Free Star Party</a>	Centennial Observatory	Saturday, May 9, 2026	9:30-11:30 p.m.	Free
<a href="#">Summer Solar Session #1</a>	Centennial Observatory	Wednesday, May 27, 2026	1:30-3:30 p.m.	Free

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## Faulkner Planetarium

### [Now Showing](#)

Find Current Shows following the (ages 18-59): \$7.50 Seniors (ages 60+): \$6.50 Children (ages 2-17): \$5.50 CSI students (w/ activity card): \$5.50 Children under age 2: FREE. Buy your \*50% discount for Planetary

- Assistive listening
- Open captioning shows.
- No food, drink, or late
- Dark conditions and intense for younger



link above. Admission: Adults (ages 60+): \$6.50 Children (ages activity card): \$5.50 Children [tickets](#) online.

Society members and families. devices available upon request. available upon request for some

entry. audio/visual effects may be too children.

# Phil Harrington's Cosmic Challenge

## The Sombrero Galaxy (M104), the Stargate, and Jaws



**This month's suggested aperture range:**  
 Binoculars  
 Featured Binoculars - Oberwerk 8 x 42 Deluxe

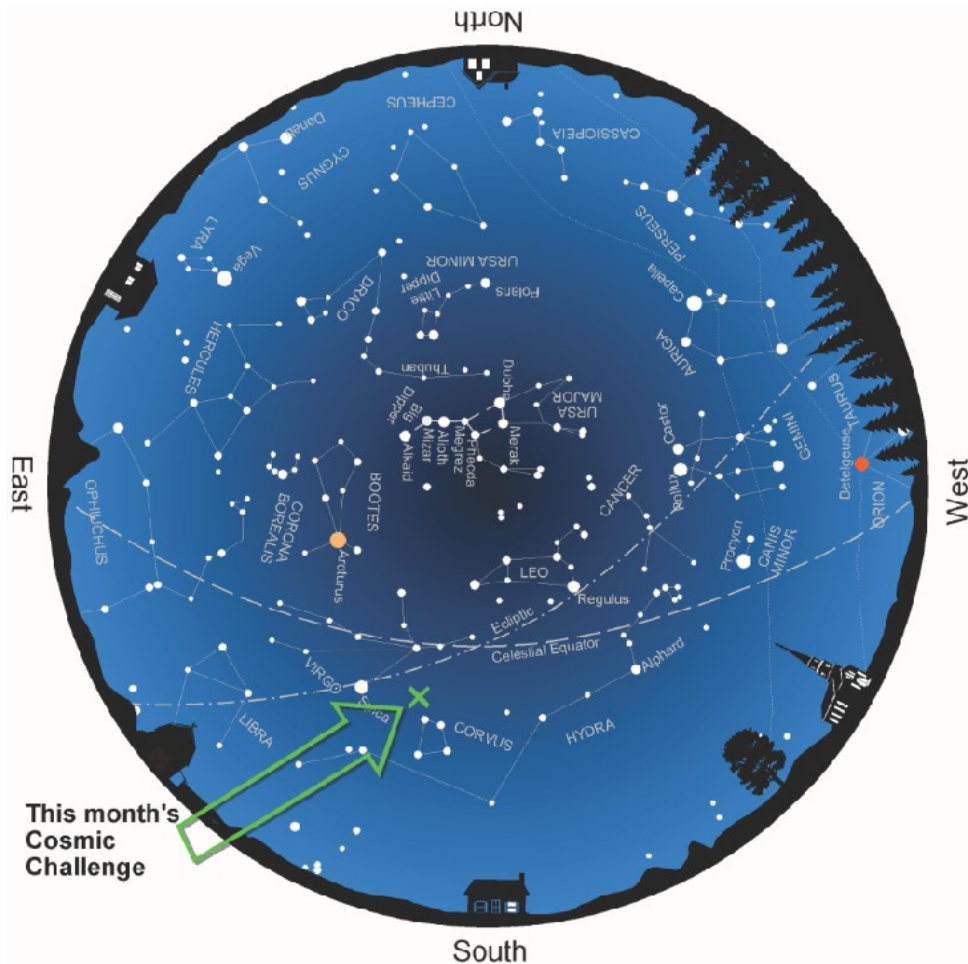
Target	Type	RA	Dec	Constellation	Magnitude	Size
M104	Spiral Galaxy	12h 40.0m	-11° 37.6'	Virgo	8	9' x 4'

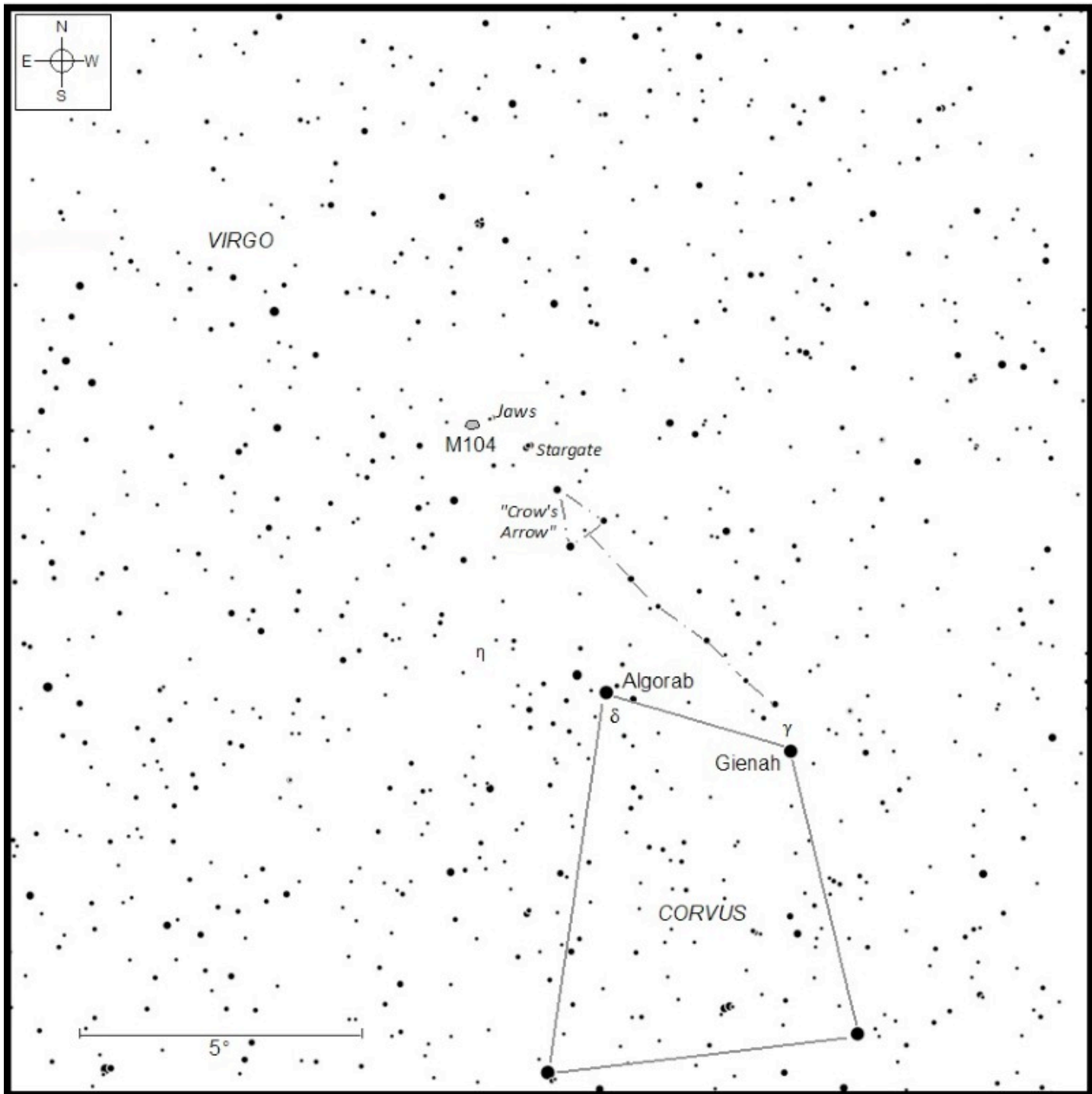
May evenings offer one of the richest galaxy fields in the entire sky. No matter where you point your binoculars or telescope across northern Virgo and southern Coma Berenices, faint smudges seem to appear everywhere you look. This region, often called the Coma-Virgo Realm of Galaxies, holds well over a thousand galaxies scattered some 50 to 60 million light years away. Under dark skies, the sheer number of systems here can feel almost overwhelming.

Most observers naturally gravitate toward the dense central portion of the Realm, where the Virgo Cluster crowds the eyepiece with Messier objects. But not every member lies packed into that core. Several stragglers drift along the outskirts, and this month we head toward the southern extreme of the Realm to visit one of the most famous galaxies in the sky, **Messier 104**, better known as the Sombrero Galaxy.

Few galaxies have a more fitting nickname. M104 is seen nearly edge-on, and a broad lane of dark dust cuts cleanly across its bright central bulge. The result is an appearance strongly reminiscent of a wide-brimmed Mexican hat, giving the Sombrero a look unlike any other galaxy in the spring sky. Even 10x binoculars show its elongated glow, while 15x and larger binoculars hint at the dark equatorial band that makes the galaxy so distinctive.

Below: Evening star map. Credit: Map adapted from [Star Watch](#) by Phil Harrington





Above: Finder chart for this month's Cosmic Challenge.

The Sombrero was discovered on May 11, 1781, by Pierre Méchain, Charles Messiers close friend. Méchain quickly informed Messier of the find, but the timing was unfortunate. Messier had already sent his catalog of 103 nebulous objects to the printer, and the new discovery missed the final list. Messier later penciled a note about the object in his personal copy of the catalog, but no supplement or revised edition ever appeared, leaving the galaxy in limbo.

More than a century later, the French astronomer Camille Flammarion came across Messiers annotated copy while browsing through a bookstore. Recognizing the importance of the marginal note, Flammarion added the object to the Messier catalog in 1921, making M104 the first of several posthumous additions to the list. Flammarion also suggested that the galaxy NGC 5866 in Draco should be identified as the missing Messier 102, although today most historians agree that M102 was simply a duplicate observation of M101.

Modern measurements place the Sombrero roughly 55 to 65 million light years away. It is often considered an outlying member of the Virgo Cluster, although its exact association is still debated. The center of the Virgo Cluster lies some 20° to the north and is somewhat closer to us, but from our vantage point the Sombrero appears along the same great realm of galaxies that fills this part of the sky. Even at that distance, M104 still shines at about 8th magnitude, bright enough to be seen with binoculars under a reasonably dark sky, provided you know exactly where to look.

For me, the easiest way to find the Sombrero is simply to follow the arrow.

Start by aiming your binoculars toward the constellation Corvus, the Crow, which sits just south of Virgos galaxy fields. The star Gienah, Gamma Corvi, marks the northwestern corner of the Crows distinctive trapezoidal body. Just to its north-northeast lies a faint 6th-magnitude star, HD 106819, the first in a short line of stars that stretches toward the northeast. At the far end of the line sits a small triangular group of stars. Taken together, the line and triangle form an asterism I like to call the **Crows Arrow**.

The tip of the Arrow points toward a tiny knot of even fainter stars that form one of the most curious little patterns in the spring sky. Through most binoculars the group looks like three points of light, but with 15× or higher magnification it resolves into six stars arranged in a perfect triangle within a triangle. The symmetry is striking enough that many observers who stumble across it are convinced they have found something new. The pattern is listed as STF 1659 in Friedrich Georg Wilhelm von Struves double-star catalog of 1827, but nicknames abound. Some observers compare it to a delta-wing spacecraft, while Texas amateur John Wagoner once suggested the name **Stargate**, inspired by the space portals in the late-1970s Buck Rogers television series. Whatever you call it, the Stargate makes a perfect waypoint on the way to the Sombrero.



Above: M104 and the asterisms Jaws and the Stargate. Photos taken by the author using the [ZWO Seestar S30 Pro](#) (wide-field) and [Celestron Origin](#) (close-up). Visit the author's [Astrobin gallery](#) to see full size versions of the images as well as additional details about the [wide-field](#) and [close-up](#) images.

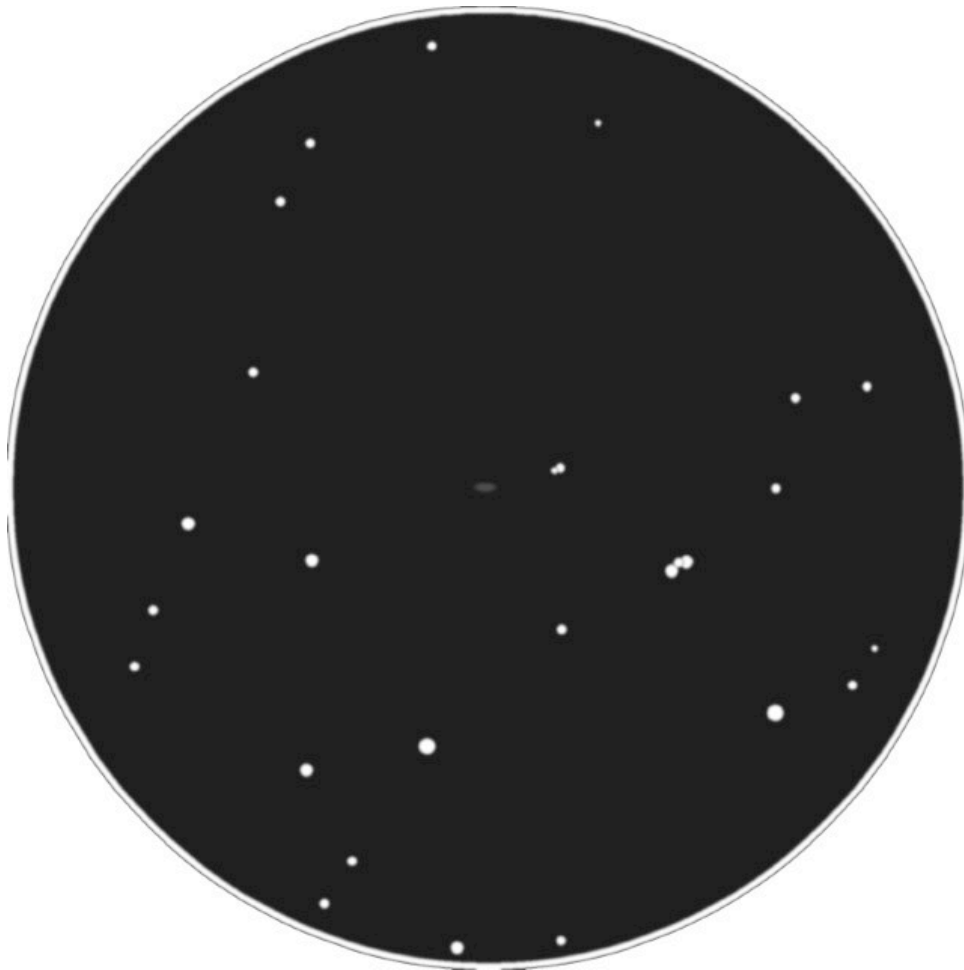
While pondering the Stargate, you may also notice another interesting asterism in the same field to the northeast. Three 8th- and 9th-magnitude stars align in a straight line that's reminiscent of Orions Belt. With 70mm and larger binoculars, fainter stars curving to the northeast combine to create an interesting outline. Tom Mote of San Antonio, Texas, was the first to introduce this pattern to me decades ago. He called the pattern "Little Sagitta" after its resemblance to that summertime constellation.

When I first saw it years ago, it reminded me of a gaunt shark. Those three stars in a row are its open mouth, leading to the patterns nickname, Jaws. The thin body of the shark curves to their northeast, complete with a dorsal fin.

M104 lies east northeast of the Stargate and Jaws in the same binocular field. Through 10×50 binoculars, the galaxy appears as a small, faint, oval glow with a noticeably bright central region. Under dark skies, the core stands out as a compact, almost stellar point embedded in a soft, elongated haze. This slight elongation hints at the galaxy's disk, though the dark dust lane that gives it its Sombrero appearance stays out of view at this magnification. Larger binoculars, such as 16×70s, can begin to suggest the presence of that lane, especially under dark skies. Because of its southerly declination, however, the galaxy never climbs very high for observers at mid northern latitudes. Trees, haze, or light pollution can easily obscure it when it is low, so the best time to observe is when it crosses the meridian and reaches its highest point in the southern sky.

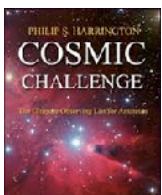
The Sombrero Galaxy may sit on the southern fringe of the Coma-Virgo Realm, but it is far from a minor player. Its bright core, sharp dust lane, and convenient location near an easy star hop make it one of the most rewarding galaxies for binocular observers and telescope users alike. And once you have traced the Crows Arrow to the Stargate and on to the Sombrero, you may find yourself lingering in this part of the sky, wandering among the countless faint systems that fill the Realm.

Until next month, remember that half of the fun is the thrill of the chase. Game on!



Above: Digitized sketch of M104 through the author's 10x50 binoculars.

#### About the Author:



Phil Harrington is a contributing editor to [Astronomy](http://www.astronomy.com) magazine and is the author of 9 books on astronomy. Visit [www.philharrington.net](http://www.philharrington.net) to learn more. [Phil Harrington's Cosmic Challenge](http://www.philharrington.net) is copyright 2026 by Philip S. Harrington. All rights reserved. No reproduction, in whole or in part, beyond single copies for use by an individual, is permitted without written permission of the copyright holder. This newsletter editor has received the authors permission to use this article.

# What's Up, Doc? †

Dr. Aaron B. Clevenson, Director, Insuperity Observatory  
May 2026

This document tells you what objects are visible this next month for many of the Astronomical League Clubs. If you are working on an advanced club, then I assume that you are tracking where your objects are all the time. I have concentrated on the common and starter level clubs. This information is based on 9 PM Mountain Daylight Time for Twin Falls, Idaho

## Naked-Eye Clubs

**Meteors** – any night, any time, anywhere, the darker the sky the better.

<u>Shower</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Type</u>
Lyrids	4/14 to 4/30	4/23 0100 UTC	CLASS 1
Eta Aquarids	4/15 to 5/27	5/6	CLASS 1
Pi Puppids	4/16 to 4/30	4/24 0600 UTC	Class 3
Delta Pavonids	3/11 to 4/16	3/31	Class 4
April Epsilon Delphinids	3/31 to 4/20	4/9	Class 4
Alpha Virginids	4/6 to 5/1	4/18	Class 4
Kappa Serpentids	4/11 to 4/22	4/16	Class 4
h-Virginids	4/24 to 5/4	5/1	Class 4

Key to Meteor Classes:

- Class 1 – Major Meteor Showers
- Class 2 – Minor Meteor Showers
- Class 3 – Variable Meteor Showers
- Class 4 – Weak Meteor Shower

**Constellations, Northern Skies** – any night, any time, anywhere, the darker the sky the better.

Last Chance this cycle: Cassiopeia, Andromeda, Triangulum, Aries, Caelum. Transit Ursa Major, Lynx, Leo Minor, Cancer, Leo, Hydra, Sextans, Pyxis, Antlia, Vela. **New arrivals:** Bootes, Virgo, Corvus.

## Binocular Clubs

**Binocular Messier** – Monthly highlights include:

Easy – 3, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 67, 93, 103.

Medium – 40, 49, 53, 63, 64, 78, 79, 81, 82, 94.

Hard – 1, 51, 65, 66, 68, 97, 101, 104, 106.

Big Binoculars – 58, 59, 60, 61, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 95, 96, 99, 100, 102, 105, 108, 109.

**Deep Sky Binocular** – Monthly highlights include (by Astronomical League numbers): 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42.

## Other Clubs

**Messier** In addition to those listed under Binocular Messier, check out: 43, 76, 91, 98.

**Caldwell** 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 71, 74, 79.

**Double Star** (by Astronomical League numbers): 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 34, 35, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 92, 95, 98, 99, 100.

Although these Observing Programs are detailed in the “**What's Up Doc?**” handout, you can get information on many of their objects of the other AL Observing Programs by using the “**What's Up Tonight, Doc?**” spreadsheet. To get your copy, talk to the Doc, Aaron Clevenson, by sending an email to [aaron@clevenson.org](mailto:aaron@clevenson.org). † - “What's Up Doc?” is used with permission from Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

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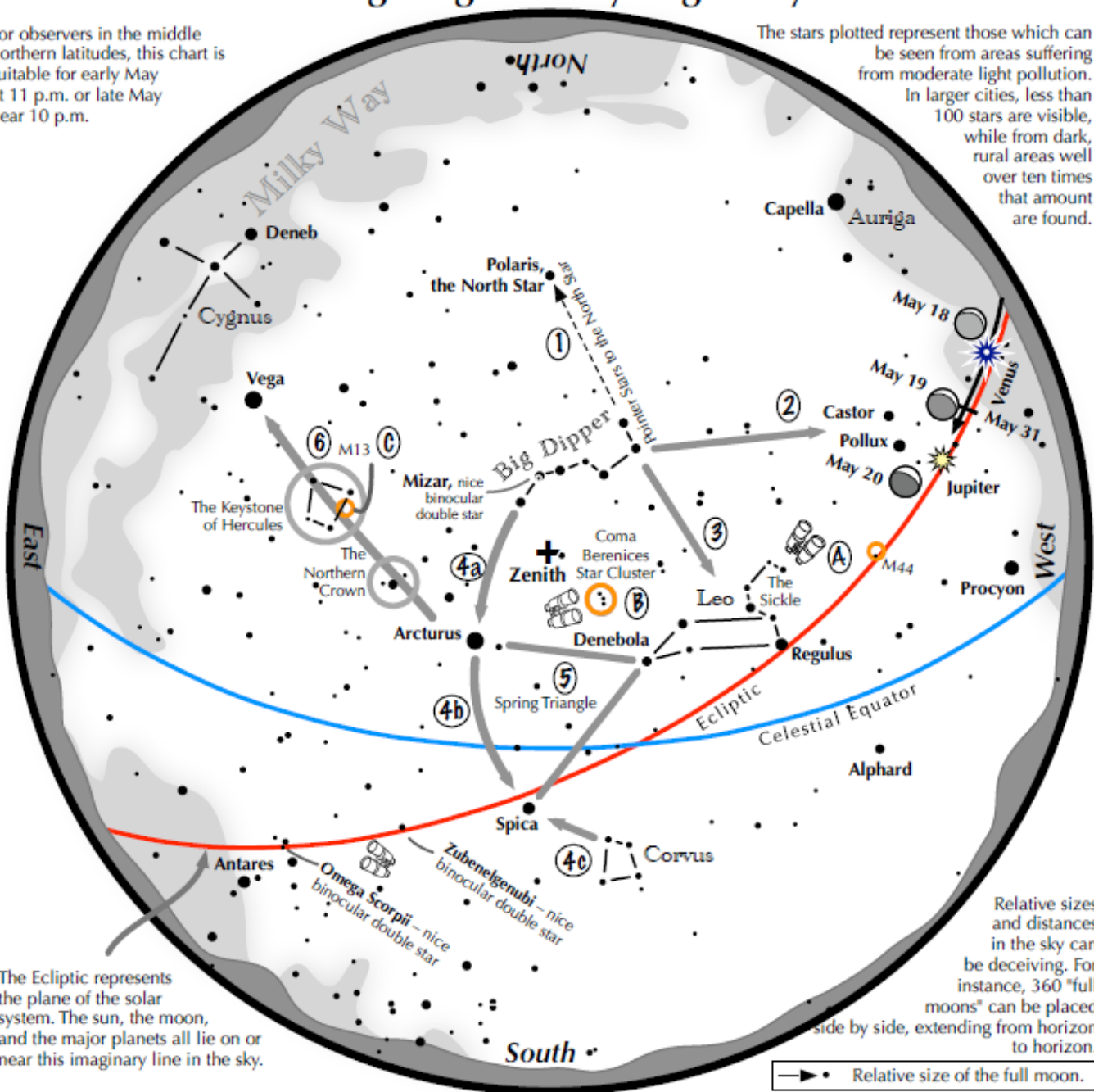
Insuperity Observatory, 2505 S. Houston Avenue, Humble, TX: [www.humbleisd.net/observatory](http://www.humbleisd.net/observatory)

# Navigating the May Night Sky

2026

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for early May at 11 p.m. or late May near 10 p.m.

The stars plotted represent those which can be seen from areas suffering from moderate light pollution. In larger cities, less than 100 stars are visible, while in dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



Relative sizes and distances in the sky can be deceiving. For instance, 360 "full moons" can be placed side by side, extending from horizon to horizon.

→ • Relative size of the full moon.

## Navigating the May night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Extend a line northward from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes by Polaris, the North Star.
- 2 Through the two diagonal stars of the Dipper's bowl, draw a line pointing to the twin stars of Castor and Pollux in Gemini.
- 3 Directly below the Dipper's bowl reclines the constellation Leo with its primary star, Regulus.
- 4 Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, then continues to Spica.
  - Confirm Spica by noting that two moderately bright stars just to its southwest form a straight line with it.
- 5 Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.
- 6 Draw a line from Arcturus to Vega. One-third of the way sits "The Northern Crown." Two-thirds of the way hides the "Keystone of Hercules." A dark sky is needed to see these two dim stellar configurations.

### Binocular Highlights

A: M44, a star cluster barely visible to the naked eye, lies to the southeast of Pollux. B: Look near the zenith for the loose star cluster of Coma Berenices. C: M13, a round glow from a cluster of over 500,000 stars.



## Websites and Other Helpful Astronomy Links.

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Information on passes of the ISS, the USAF's X-37B, the HST, the BlueWalker 3, and other satellites can be found at <http://www.heavens-above.com/>

Visit <https://saberdoesthe...does-the-stars/> for tips on spotting extreme crescent Moons and <https://curtrenz.com/moon.html> for Full Moon and other lunar data.

Go to <https://skyandtelesc...ads/MoonMap.pdf> and <https://celestron-si...RReeves-web.pdf> and <https://nightsky.jpl...ObserveMoon.pdf> for simple lunar maps. Click on <https://astrostrona.pl/moon-map/> for an excellent online lunar map. Visit <http://www.ap-i.net/avl/en/start> to download the free Virtual Moon Atlas. Consult <http://time.unitariu...moon/where.html> for current information on the Moon and <https://www.fourmila.../lunarform.html> for information on various lunar features. See <https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/4955> a lunar phase and libration calculator and <https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/5187/>

The Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Camera (LROC) quick map. <https://www.universa...ise-and-sunset/>

For more on the planets and how to locate them, browse <http://www.nakedeyeplanets.com/>

Summaries on the planets for each month can be found at <https://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/>

The graphic at <https://www.timeandd...lanets/distance> displays the apparent and comparative sizes of the planets, along with their magnitudes and distances, for a given date and time.

The rise and set times and locations of the planets can be determined by clicking on <https://www.timeandd...stronomy/night/>

Click on <https://www.curtrenz.../asteroids.html> for information on asteroid occultations taking place this month.

Visit <http://cometchasing.skyhound.com/> and <http://www.aerith.ne...tfuture-n.html> and <https://cobs.si/> for additional information on comets visible this month.

A list of the closest approaches of comets to the Earth is posted at <http://www.cometogra.../nearcomet.html>

A wealth of current information on solar system celestial bodies is posted at <http://www.curtrenz.com/astronomy.html> and <http://nineplanets.org/>

Information on the celestial events transpiring each week can be found at <https://stardate.org/nightsky> and <http://astronomy.com/skythisweek> and <http://www.skyandtel...ky-at-a-glance/>

Free star maps for any month may be downloaded at <http://www.skymaps.com/downloads.html> and <https://www.telescop...thly-Star-Chart> and <http://www.kenpress.com/index.html>

Data on current supernovae can be found at <http://www.rochester...y.org/snimages/>

Finder charts for the Messier objects and other deep-sky objects are posted at <https://freestarcharts.com/messier> and <https://freestarcharts.com/ngc-ic> and [http://www.cambridge...\\_april-june.htm](http://www.cambridge..._april-june.htm)

Telrad finder charts for the Messier Catalog are posted at <http://www.custerobs...cs/messier2.pdf> and <http://www.star-shin...ssierTelrad.htm>

Telrad finder charts for the SAC's 110 Best of the NGC are available at <https://www.saguaroa...k110BestNGC.pdf>

Information pertaining to observing some of the more prominent Messier galaxies can be found at <http://www.cloudynig...ur-astronomers/>

Author Phil Harrington offers an excellent freeware planetarium program for binocular observers known as TUBA (Touring the Universe through Binoculars Atlas), which also includes information on purchasing binoculars, at <http://www.philharrington.net/tuba.htm>

Stellarium and Cartes du Ciel are two excellent freeware planetarium programs that are available at <http://stellarium.org/> and <https://www.ap-i.net/skychart/en/start>

Deep-sky object list generators can be found at <http://www.virtualcolony.com/sac/> and <https://telescopus.com/> and <http://tonightssky.com/MainPage.php>

Freeware sky atlases can be downloaded at <http://www.deepskywa...-atlas-full.pdf> and <https://www.cloudyni...ar-charts-r1021> and <https://allans-stuff.com/triatlas/>

For current sky charts visit the NASA Night Sky Network <https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/news/212/>

McDonald Observatory famous radio program stardate is now a podcast <https://stardate.org/podcast>

# Magic Valley Astronomical Society

550 Sparks St.  
Twin Falls, ID

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The Magic Valley Astronomical Society (MVAS) was founded in 1976. The Society is a non-profit [501(c) 3] educational and scientific organization dedicated to bringing together people with an interest in astronomy.

In partnership with the Centennial Observatory, Herrett Center, College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls; we hold regularly scheduled monthly meetings and observation sessions, at which we share information on current astronomical events, tools and techniques for observation, astrophotography, astronomical computer software, and other topics concerning general astronomy. Members enthusiastically share their telescopes and knowledge of the night sky with all who are interested. In addition to our monthly public star parties we hold members only star parties at various locations throughout the Magic Valley.

MVAS promotes the education of astronomy and the exploration of the night sky along with safe solar observing through our public outreach programs. We provide two types of outreach; public star parties and events open to anyone interested in astronomy, and outreach programs for individual groups and organizations (e.g. schools, churches, scout troops, company events, etc.), setting up at your location. All of our outreach programs are provided by MVAS volunteers at no cost. However, MVAS will gladly accept donations. Donations enable us to continue and improve our public outreach programs.

Membership is not just about personal benefits. Your membership dues support the work that the Magic Valley Astronomical Society does in the community to promote the enjoyment and science of astronomy. Speakers, public star parties, classes and support for astronomy in schoolrooms, and outreach programs just to name a few of the programs that your membership dues support.

Annual Membership dues will be:

\$20.00 for individuals, families, and \$10.00 for students.

Contact Treasurer Jim Tubbs for dues information via e-mail: [jtubbs015@msn.com](mailto:jtubbs015@msn.com)

Donations to our club are always welcome and are even tax deductible. Please contact a board member for details.

Lending Telescopes: The society currently has three telescopes for loan and would gladly accept others please contact President Robert Mayer, for more information on these and other benefits.



Telescopes are an individual thing and not practical for public use. However, everyone should have the experience of a good look at the Moon for at least 5 minutes in their life time. It is a dimension and feeling that is unexplainable. Pictures or TV can't give this feeling, awareness, or experience of true dimension. A person will not forget seeing our closest neighbor, the Moon.

Norman Herrett in a letter to Dr. J. L. Taylor, president of the College of Southern Idaho