Snake River Skies

The Monthly Newsletter of the Magic Valley Astronomical Society. October 2026

Membership Meeting
Oct. 10th 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

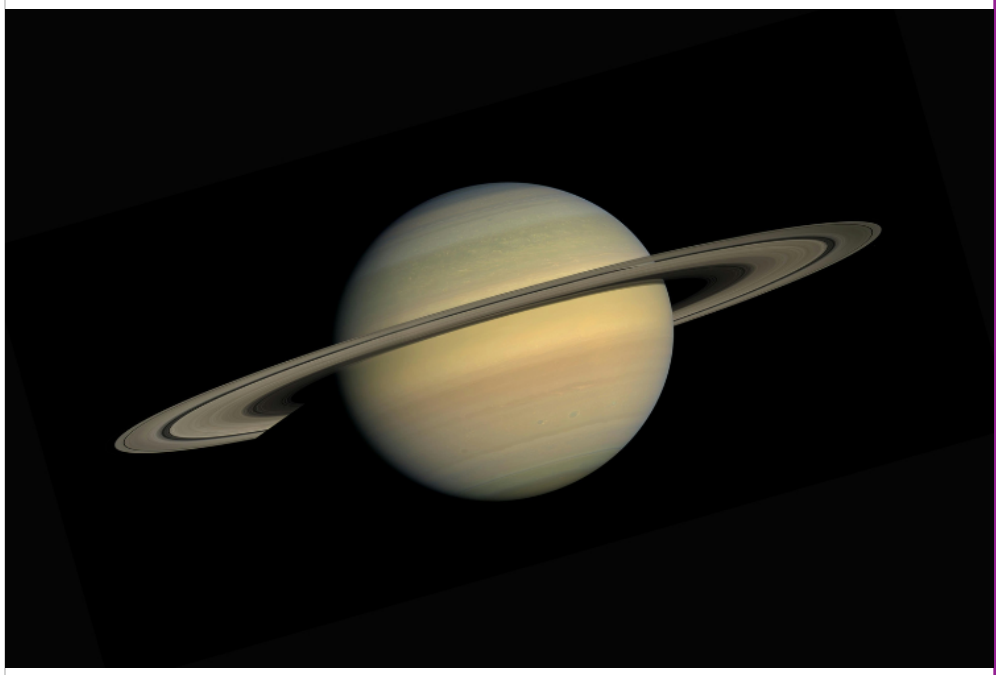


M-51 imaged by
Rick Widmer & Ken Thomason
Herrett Telescope - Shotwell Camera

October 2026 Vice President's Message

Looking forward to cooler weather and less smoke and clouds so we can have some better skies to get back to some nighttime viewing, as it did not happen in September. Our meeting will be on the 10th of October at 7:00 pm. Our presentations will be by Jim Tubbs -They Caught Balls of Fite. I hope to see everyone at the meeting. With the election of officers next month, we need to see who is running. Vice President Jay Hartwell

October 4 - **Saturn at Opposition - Closet approach of Saturn** Celebrate Saturn at its closest approach of 2026 with a special night of telescope viewing at the observatory. During this time, the ringed planet reaches its minimum distance from Earth for the year—about 784 million miles (1.26 billion km) away—making it one of the best opportunities to see it clearly through our telescopes.



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www.mvastro.org

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Calendar of Astronomical Events - October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 The Moon at perigee	2 The Andromeda Galaxy is well placed NGC 253 is well placed on Sat.	3 Moon at Last Quarter 
4 **Closet approach of Saturn** Asteroid 2 Pallas at opposition Conjunction of the Moon and Mars	5 Conjunction of the Moon and Mars Close approach of the Moon and M44	6 October Camelopardalid meteor shower 2026 Lunar occultation of Jupiter	7	8	9 Draconid meteor shower 2026	10 MVAS Meeting 7:00p at the Herrett Center. Centennial Observatory Star Party 8:00 - 10:00 pm **New Moon**
11 Close approach of Mars and M44 δ-Aurigid meteor shower 2026	12 Indigenous Peoples' Day Thanksgiving Day - Canada Conjunction of the Moon and Mercury	13 Asteroid 4 Vesta at opposition The Moon at perihelion	14	15 The Triangulum Galaxy is well placed	16 The Moon at apogee	17 Mercury at dichotomy
18 Moon at First Quarter ε-Geminid meteor shower 2026 136199 Eris at opposition	19	20	21 Orionid meteor shower 2026	22	23 The Moon at aphelion	24 Conjunction of the Moon and Saturn Leonis Minorid meteor shower 2026
25 Full Moon 	26 The Perseus Double Cluster is well placed 136108 Haumea at solar conjunction	27 Close approach of the Moon and M45	28 The Moon at perigee	29	30	31 Halloween 

This is the month when game is fattening up for winter. Now is the time for hunting and laying in a store of provisions for the long months ahead.

Drying Rice Moon (Dakota) describes the next process in preparing rice for winter. **Falling Leaves Moon** is an Anishinaabe term. **Freezing Moon** (Ojibwe) and **Ice Moon** (Haida) refer to the increasingly cold temperatures of this period. **Migrating Moon** (Cree) refers to the time when birds begin to fly south.

Herrett Center for Arts and Science

Centennial Observatory



Upcoming Events
All events are weather permitting

Event	Place	Date	Time	Admission(s)
Closest approach of Saturn in 2026	Centennial Observatory	Sunday, October 4, 2026	1:15-1:45 a.m.	Free
Monthly Free Star Party	Centennial Observatory	Saturday, October 10, 2026	8:00-10:00 p.m.	Free

Faulkner Planetarium

Now Showing



Find Current Shows following the link above. Admission: Adults (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 tickets online.
*50% discount for Planetary Society members and families.

- Assistive listening devices available upon request.
- Open captioning available upon request for some shows.
- No food, drink, or late entry.
- Dark conditions and audio/visual effects may be too intense for younger children.



Cosmic Pursuits - Night Sky this Month – October 2026

1. Jupiter and Mars grow brighter in the morning sky. Observers in North America see the Moon occult Jupiter, while Mars passes right though the Beehive star cluster, a spectacular event not to be missed. Venus makes an impressive conjunction with Mercury for southern observers. And the Orionid meteor shower puts on its annual show as bits of Comet Halley burn up in the Earth's atmosphere.

2. Saturn reaches opposition in October, making its closest approach to Earth this year. It remains in prime observing position through early 2027. Here's our guide to seeing Saturn for yourself during this observing season.

3. The smoke, clouds, wind, bugs, moon, and all other forms of pestilence finally disappeared, so I grabbed a telescope and headed out to dark sky for some visual observing and photography. This is what I saw...

4. The Royal Greenwich Observatory and ZWO released the results of their Astrophotographer of the Year competition. See the amazing images from the winners here...

5. Results from the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument (DESI) helped astronomers create the most detailed map of the universe so far, one that may tell us how the universe will meet its end. See the video fly-through of these results at this link...

And the astronomy quote of the month: "... I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free." - Wendell Berry



The thickest part of the northern Milky Way, on its way out for the year. Image credit: Brian Ventrudo.

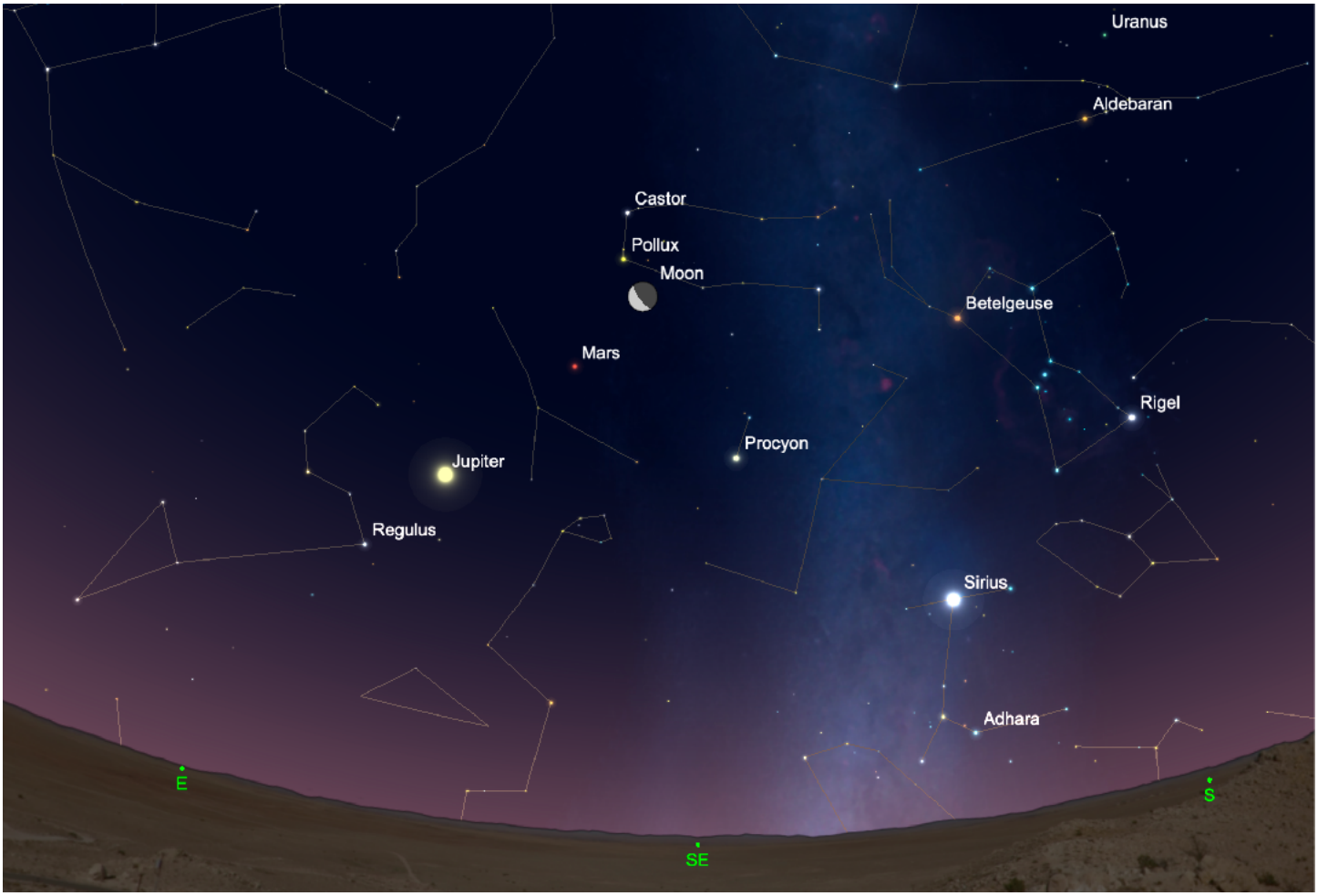
Grab a sweater – or a parka, if needed – and head outside this month to see the solar system at work. Jupiter and Mars grow brighter in the eastern morning sky and rendezvous with the waning crescent Moon. Observers in much of North America see the Moon occult Jupiter on the 6th, while Mars passes through the Beehive star cluster, a spectacular event not to be missed. Venus moves low towards the Sun in the evening sky on its way to conjunction, but has an impressive meet-up with Mercury for southern-hemisphere observers. And the Orionid meteor shower puts on its annual show as bits and pieces of Comet Halley burn up in the Earth's atmosphere.

3 October 2026. Last Quarter Moon, 13:25 UT (6:25 MDT)

4 Oct. A waning crescent Moon lies high in the eastern sky near Castor and Pollux before sunrise. Look for Mars to the east in the constellation Cancer, and Jupiter next door in Leo. **Saturn** reaches opposition and rises in the east as the Sun sets in the west. The planet lies 8.43 AU from Earth tonight just over the border of Pisces in Cetus. This marks its closest approach to Earth in 2026. The planet is slowly moving northwards and now lies about 2.9° south of the celestial equator, so it's well positioned for all observers to get good views of its magnificent ring system. It's worth the effort: Saturn is one of the most beautiful objects to observe in a telescope. At opposition, its disk spans about 19.7" and its rings about 46" and reaches a brightness of magnitude +0.3. The rings are tilted 7.5° to our point of view this year which makes for a unique view of the southern side of the rings. Our Saturn Observing Guide will help you get a good view of this lovely celestial object and understand what to look for. Saturn remains visible through the rest of the year.

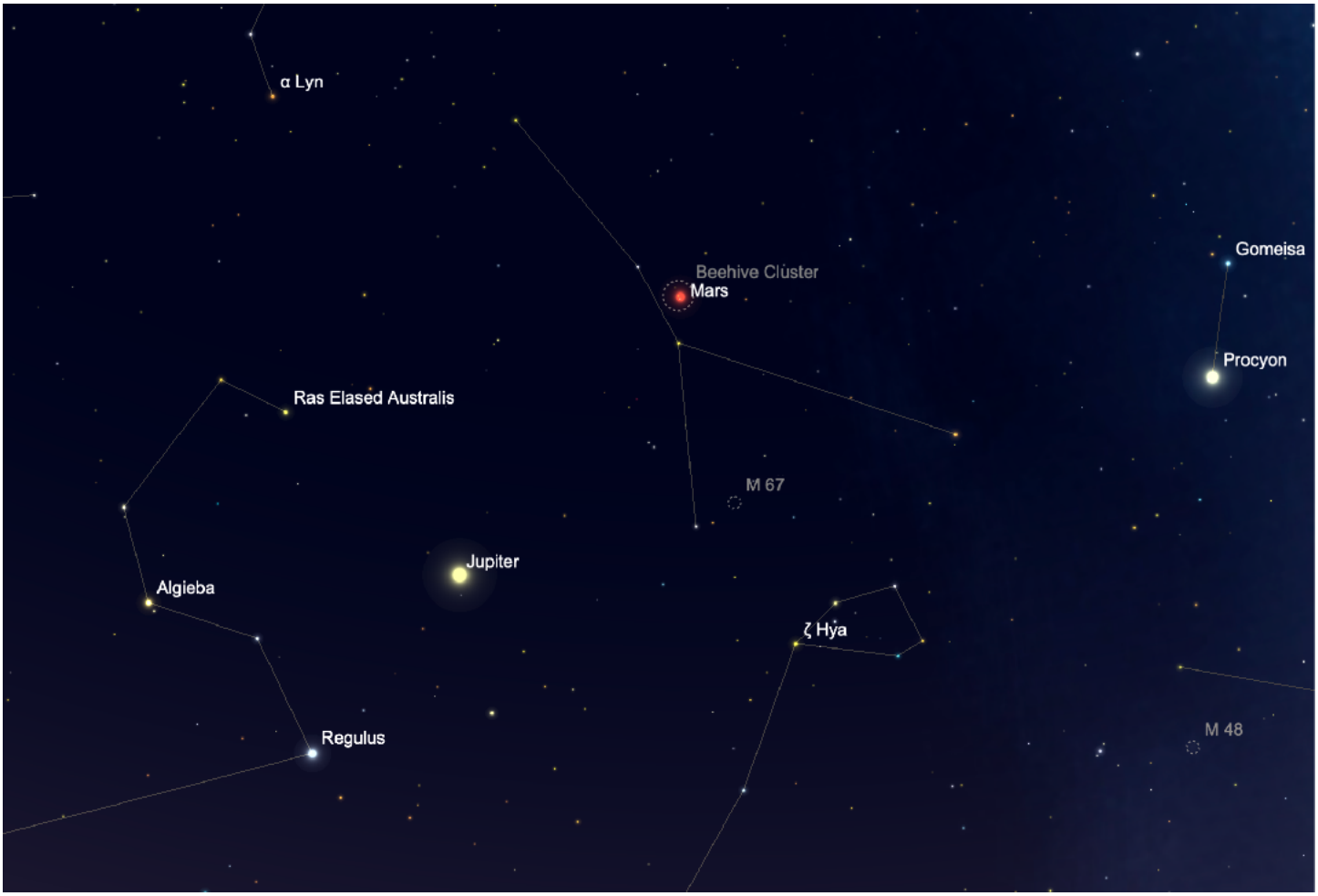
5 Oct. Further east now, the crescent Moon lies tangled in the stars of the Beehive star cluster (Messier 44) in Cancer. Grab a pair of binoculars to see them together in the pre-dawn sky. Mars, slowly brightening, now shows a disk nearly 6" across in a telescope.

6 Oct. The Moon is at it again, this time making a close pass of brilliant Jupiter in the pre-dawn sky. Observers in eastern Canada and much of the U.S. and Caribbean will see the Moon occult Jupiter.



Mars, Jupiter, and the Moon in the pre-dawn sky on October 4, 2026.

8 Oct. Southern-hemisphere observers see Mercury just 5° to the right of Venus in the western evening sky after sunset. Mercury shines at magnitude 0.0 and shows a small gibbous disk about 6” across in a telescope. Venus, by contrast, shows a slender crescent that spans 54” and shines at magnitude -4.4. Each day, the crescent of Venus grows slimmer and larger as the planet moves closer to Earth on its way to inferior conjunction.



Mars in the Beehive star cluster in the early morning of Oct. 11, 2026. Link takes you to a bigger image.

10 October. New Moon, 15:50 UT

11 Oct. Mars pass through the Beehive star cluster! Grab your optics to help enjoy this rather spectacular event in the eastern sky well after midnight until dawn.

12 Oct. Mercury reaches greatest elongation 25° east of the Sun. The planet remains well placed for observation in the evening sky for southern-hemisphere observers.

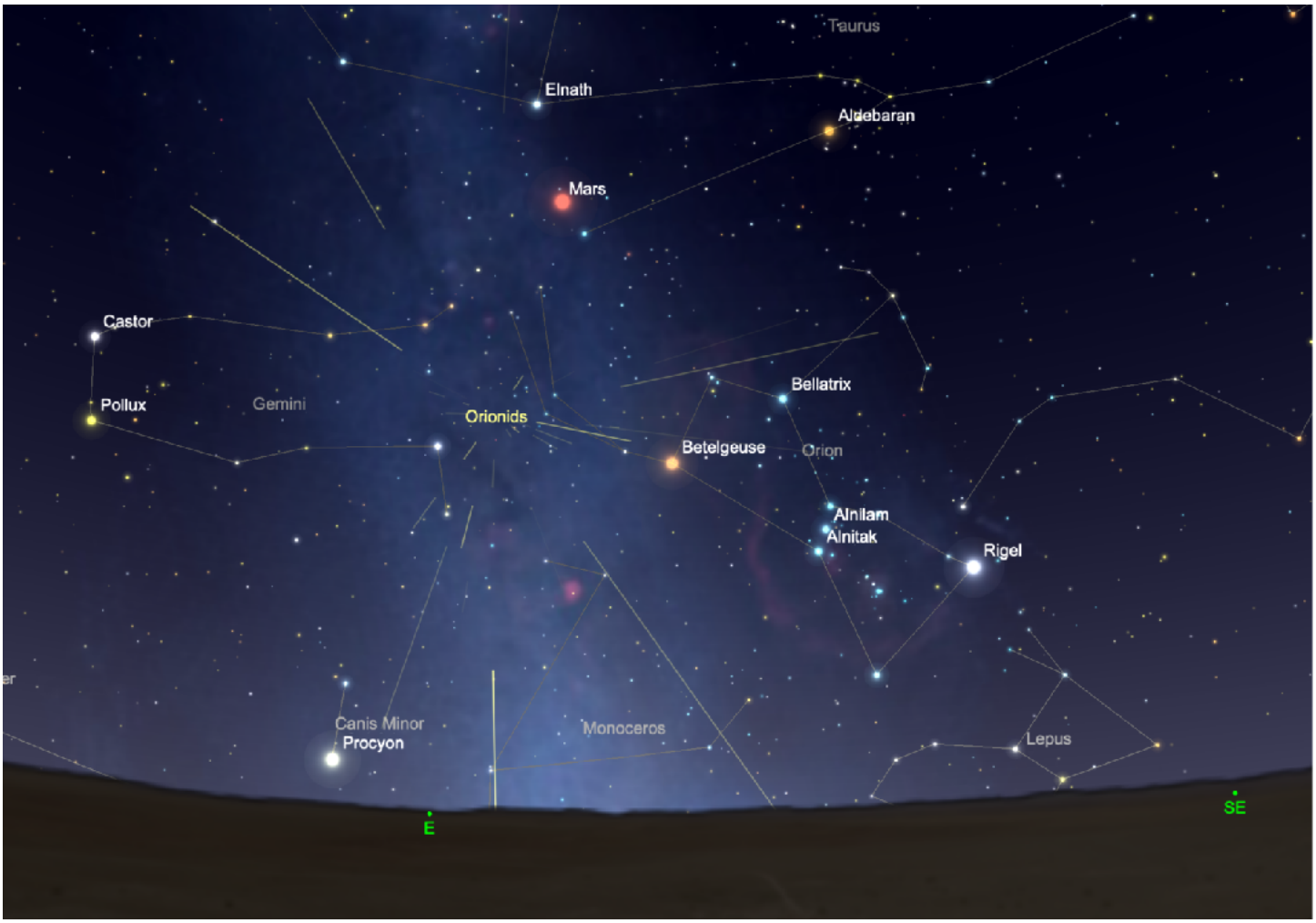
12-13 Oct. A slender crescent Moon joins Venus and Mercury low over the western horizon after sunset (for southern-hemisphere observers only).

8-21 Oct. Over the next two weeks, northern-hemisphere observers with very dark sky can see the zodiacal light in the east about 90-120 minutes before sunrise. This whitish wedge of light appears to thrust upward from the horizon towards the constellations Gemini and Cancer. The zodiacal light is simply sunlight reflected off tiny dust particles in the inner solar system.

21-22 Oct. The Orionids, one of the best meteor showers of the year, peak in the early morning hours today. They usually show as many as 20-40 fast-moving meteors per hour in dark sky. These meteors can appear anywhere in the sky and trace their paths back to the radiant near the top of the club of Orion. Maximum activity usually occurs between midnight and dawn. This year, the gibbous Moon gets out of the way after midnight to darken the sky for the faintest meteors. Like the Eta Aquariids in May, the Orionids are tiny pieces of Comet 1/P Halley that strike the upper atmosphere as the Earth passes through the famous comet’s debris field.

24 Oct. Venus reaches inferior conjunction passes about 6.6° south of the Sun (do NOT try to observe this with a telescope – it's too dangerous).

26 October. Full Moon, 04:12 UT (Harvest Moon)



Wishing you clear skies! Brian Ventrudo, Publisher Copyright © 2026 Mintaka Publishing Inc.
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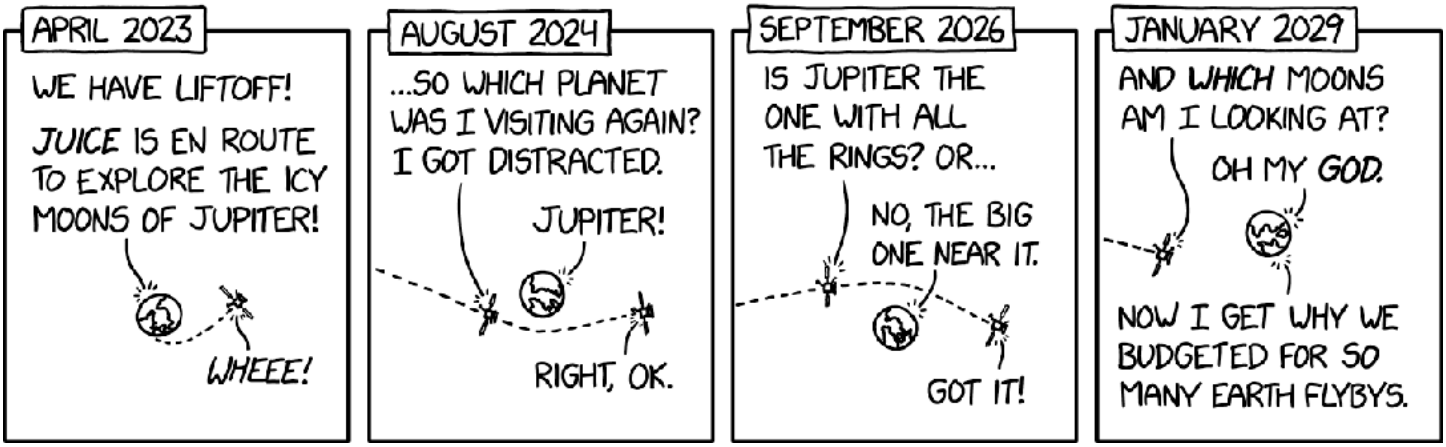

Cartoon of the JUICE mission courtesy of https://xkcd.com/3304/ Randall Munroe, artist

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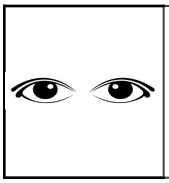
Phil Harrington's Cosmic Challenge

Triangulum Galaxy M33



This month's suggested aperture range:
Naked Eye Observing



Target	RA	DEC	Constellation	Magnitude	Size
M33	01h 33.8m	+30° 39.6'	Triangulum	6	65.6'x38.0'

M33, the famous Triangulum Galaxy, is considered by many observers to be one of the ultimate tests of an autumn night's darkness and transparency. Infamous for its low surface brightness, many an amateur has spent long hours searching for it through telescopes to no avail. It is a wonderfully frustrating contradiction.

With its brightness usually listed at about magnitude 6, many new observers assume that M33 should be readily visible through a telescope. But it is not. That magnitude represents the galaxy's total light as if it were concentrated into a single point. Instead, M33 spreads its light across an area of sky larger than the Full Moon. As a result, its surface brightness, or brightness per unit area, is very low. Under anything less than a dark, transparent sky, its feeble glow blends almost seamlessly into the background. M33 is remarkably easy to pass right over without even noticing it.

That same characteristic makes spotting M33 with the unaided eye a particularly satisfying challenge. Late summer and autumn offer excellent opportunities, as Triangulum and neighboring Andromeda climb higher into the evening sky. Naturally, the Moon should be absent, and the farther you can get from artificial light, the better. Exceptional atmospheric transparency is just as important as darkness. Even a seemingly clear sky can contain enough haze or moisture to erase M33 completely.

To find it without optical aid, begin with Alpha (α) Trianguli and Mirach (Beta [β] Andromedae). M33 lies roughly a third of the way from Alpha Trianguli toward Mirach. Do not expect anything resembling the elongated glow of the Andromeda Galaxy, M31. Instead, look for an exceedingly subtle, diffuse brightening perhaps comparable in apparent size to the Full Moon. Averted vision may help, although some observers find that gently sweeping their gaze back and forth across the area makes the galaxy easier to suspect.

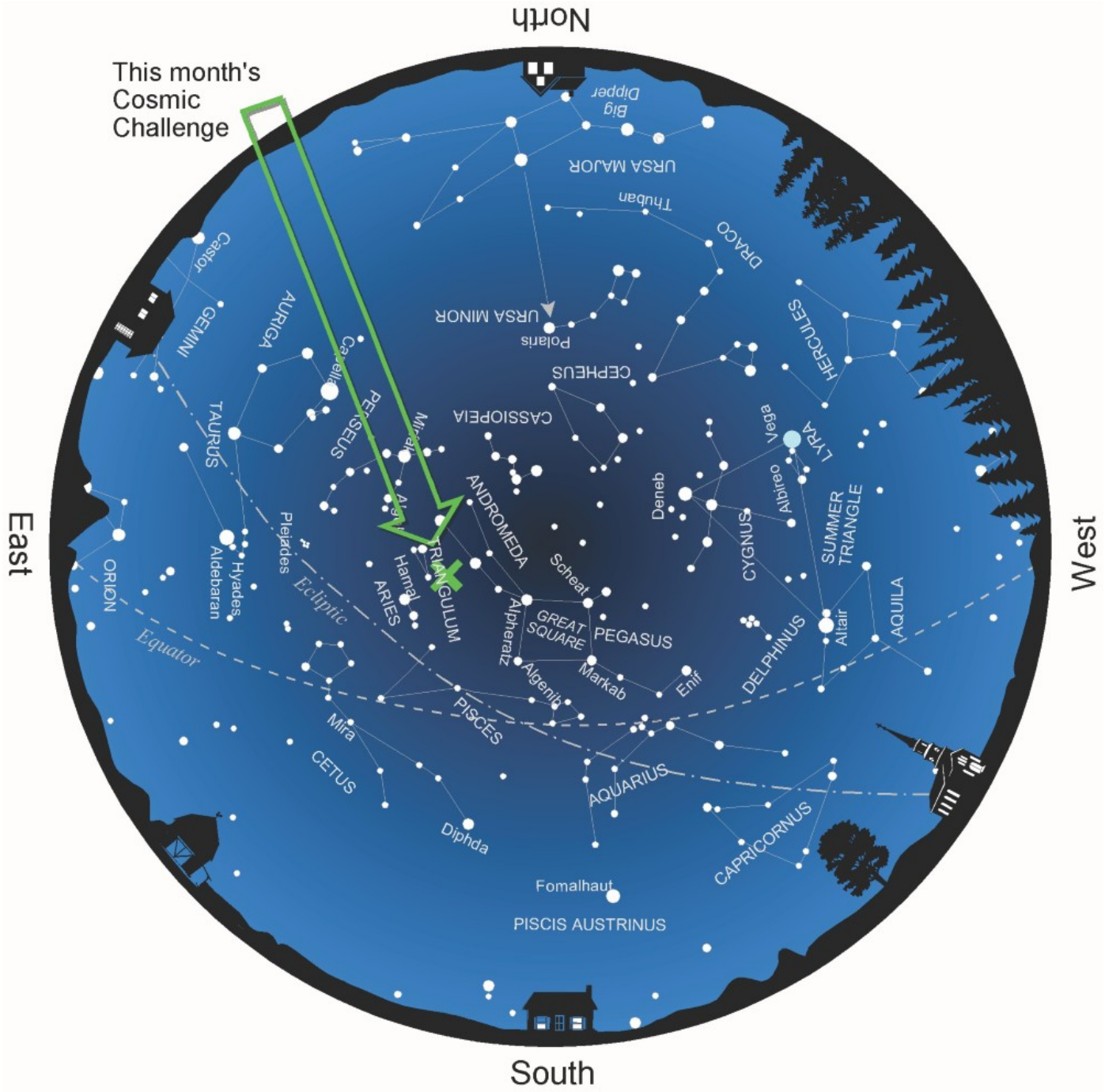
There is also a useful test. Once you think you have located M33, look away for a few moments and then try again. Can you return to exactly the same faint patch? Repeated sightings at the correct location are far more convincing than a single fleeting impression.

I fondly recall my first naked eye encounter with M33 during the 1974 Stellafane convention in Springfield, Vermont. In the early morning hours, a friend and I were sitting on the stone wall in front of Stellafane's historic pink clubhouse atop Breezy Hill, enjoying the beauty of the seasonal sky. It was an exceptionally clear night, with the full span of M31 visually accounted for. I thought I could also see M33 nearby, but my friend was convinced that I was imagining it.

Our debate began to heat up when out of the inky darkness came none other than Walter Scott Houston, the legendary deep-sky observer and longtime author of Sky & Telescope magazine's "Deep Sky Wonders" column. He must have overheard us. With a certain knowing tone to his voice, he announced that "M33 is quite obvious tonight" and wondered if we had spotted it. That quickly settled our debate in my favor!

That experience remains a reminder of just how extraordinary a truly dark, transparent sky can be. M33 is often described as the most distant object visible to the unaided human eye, lying nearly 3 million light years away. But it does not hold that distinction unequivocally. Under exceptionally dark skies, experienced observers have reported seeing the much more distant galaxy M81 in Ursa Major without optical aid. Still, catching the faint glow of M33 with nothing more than your eyes is an unforgettable accomplishment.

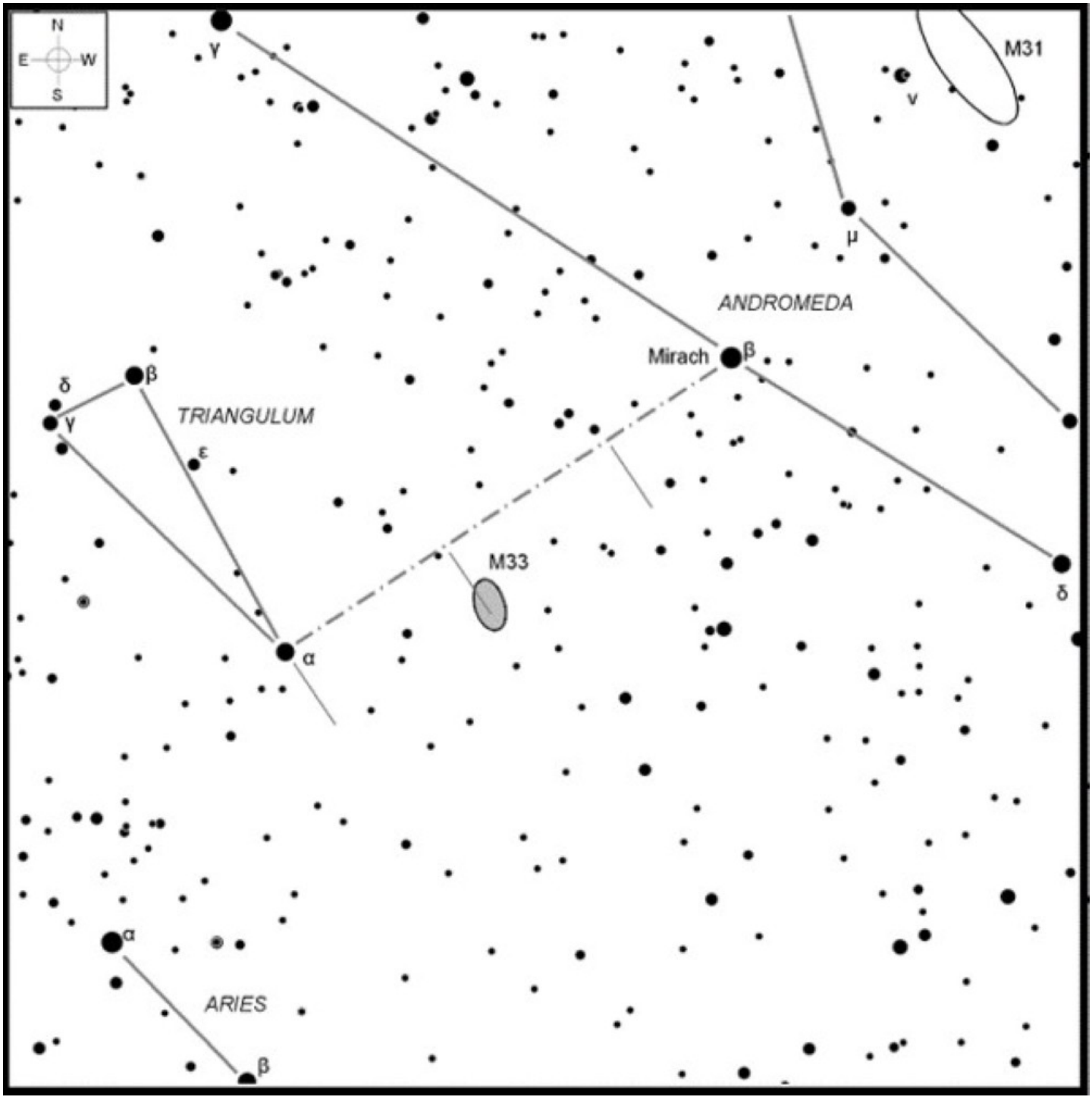
Classified as an Sc spiral galaxy, M33 is tilted only modestly from face-on to our line of sight, giving us an excellent view of its overall structure. Its spiral arms can be suspected through large amateur telescopes, pinwheeling away from the galaxy's central region. Scattered along those arms are numerous knots of stars, glowing clouds of hydrogen, and enormous stellar nurseries. Several are impressive observing challenges in their own right.



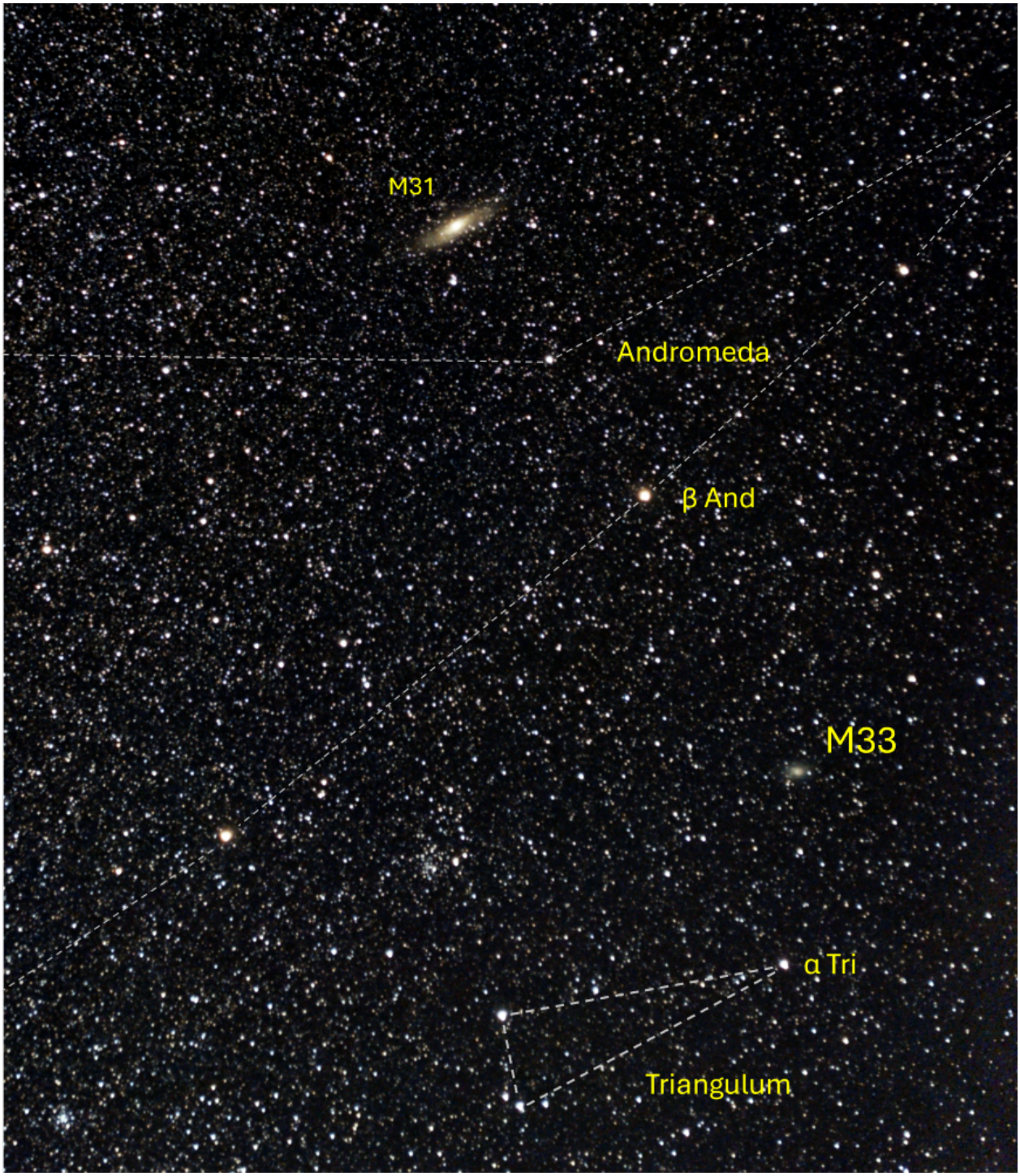
Timetable

July 1	5 a.m.	October 1	11 p.m.
August 1	3 a.m.	November 1	9 p.m.
September 1	1 a.m.	December 1	7 p.m.

All times are standard time. Add 1 hour for Daylight Saving Time.

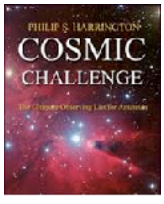


Above: Chart for this month's Cosmic Challenge. Chart adapted from **Cosmic Challenge** by Phil Harrington



We will meet the brightest in next month's challenge. Meanwhile, be sure to post your result in this column's discussion forum. Or contact me directly through my web site. Until next month, remember that half of the fun is the thrill of the chase. Game on!

About the Author:



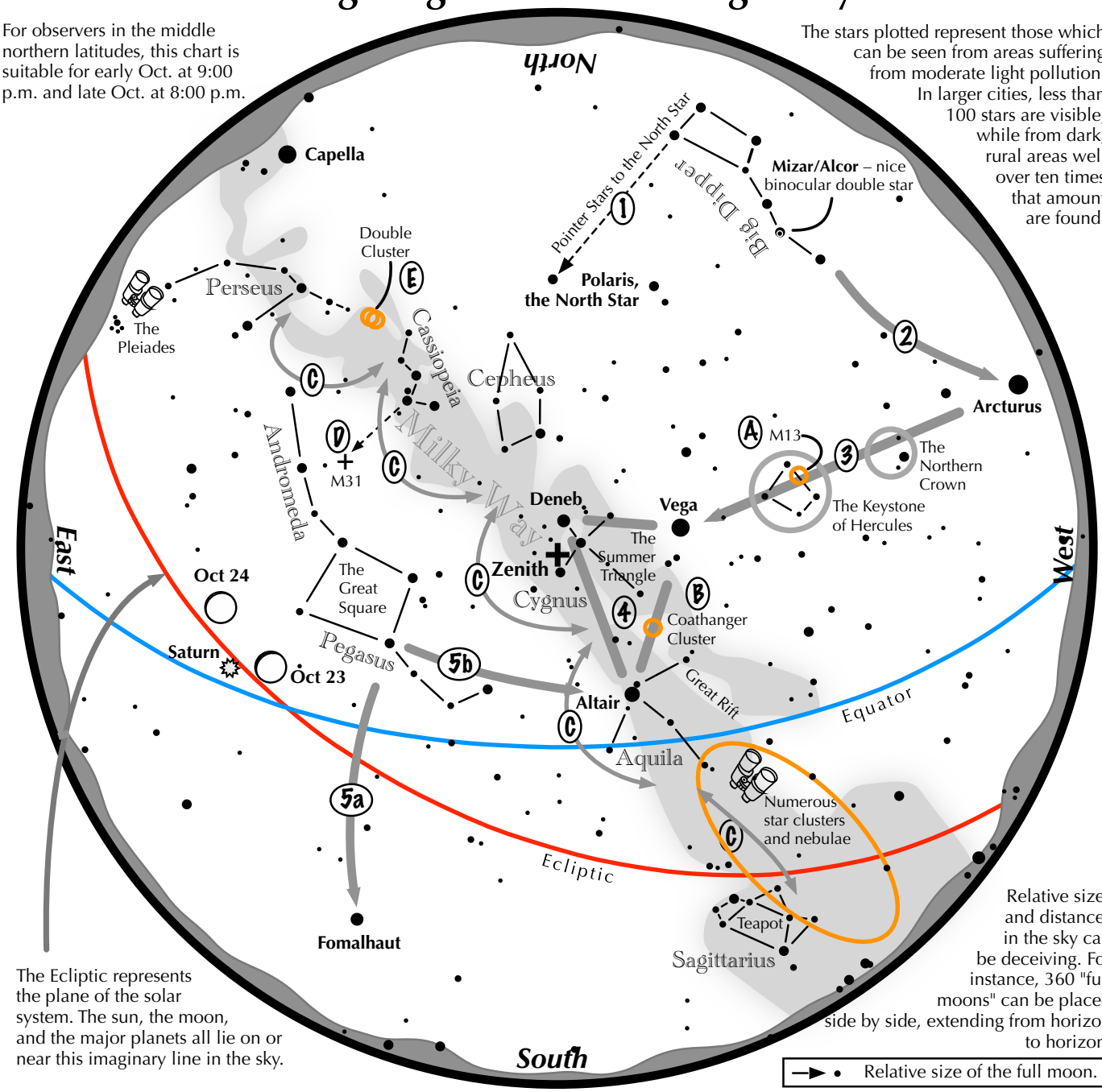
Phil Harrington is a contributing editor to Astronomy magazine and is the author of 9 books on astronomy. Visit www.philharrington.net to learn more. Phil Harrington's Cosmic Challenge is copyright 2026 by Philip S. Harrington. All rights reserved. No reproduction, in whole or in part, beyond single 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.

Navigating the October Night Sky

2026

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for early Oct. at 9:00 p.m. and late Oct. at 8:00 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 from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



The Ecliptic represents the plane of the solar system. The sun, the moon, and the major planets all lie on or near this imaginary line in the sky.

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 October night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

1. Extend a line north from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes by Polaris, the North Star.
2. Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It intersects Arcturus, the brightest star in the early October evening sky.
3. To the northeast of Arcturus shines another star of the same brightness, Vega. Draw a line from Arcturus to Vega. It first meets "The Northern Crown," then the "Keystone of Hercules." A dark sky is needed to see these two dim stellar configurations.
4. Nearly overhead lie the summer triangle stars of Vega, Altair, and Deneb.
5. High in the east are the four moderately bright stars of the Great Square. Its two southern stars point west to Altair. Its two western stars point south to Fomalhaut.

Binocular Highlights

A: On the western side of the Keystone glows the Great Hercules Cluster, a ball of 500,000 stars. **B:** 40% of the way between Altair and Vega, twinkles the "Coathanger," a group of stars outlining a coathanger. **C:** Sweep along the Milky Way for an astounding number of fuzzy star clusters and nebulae amid many faint glows and dark bays, including the Great Rift. **D:** The three westernmost stars of Cassiopeia's "W" point south to M31, the Andromeda Galaxy, a "fuzzy" oval. **E:** Between the "W" of Cassiopeia and Perseus lies the Double Cluster.

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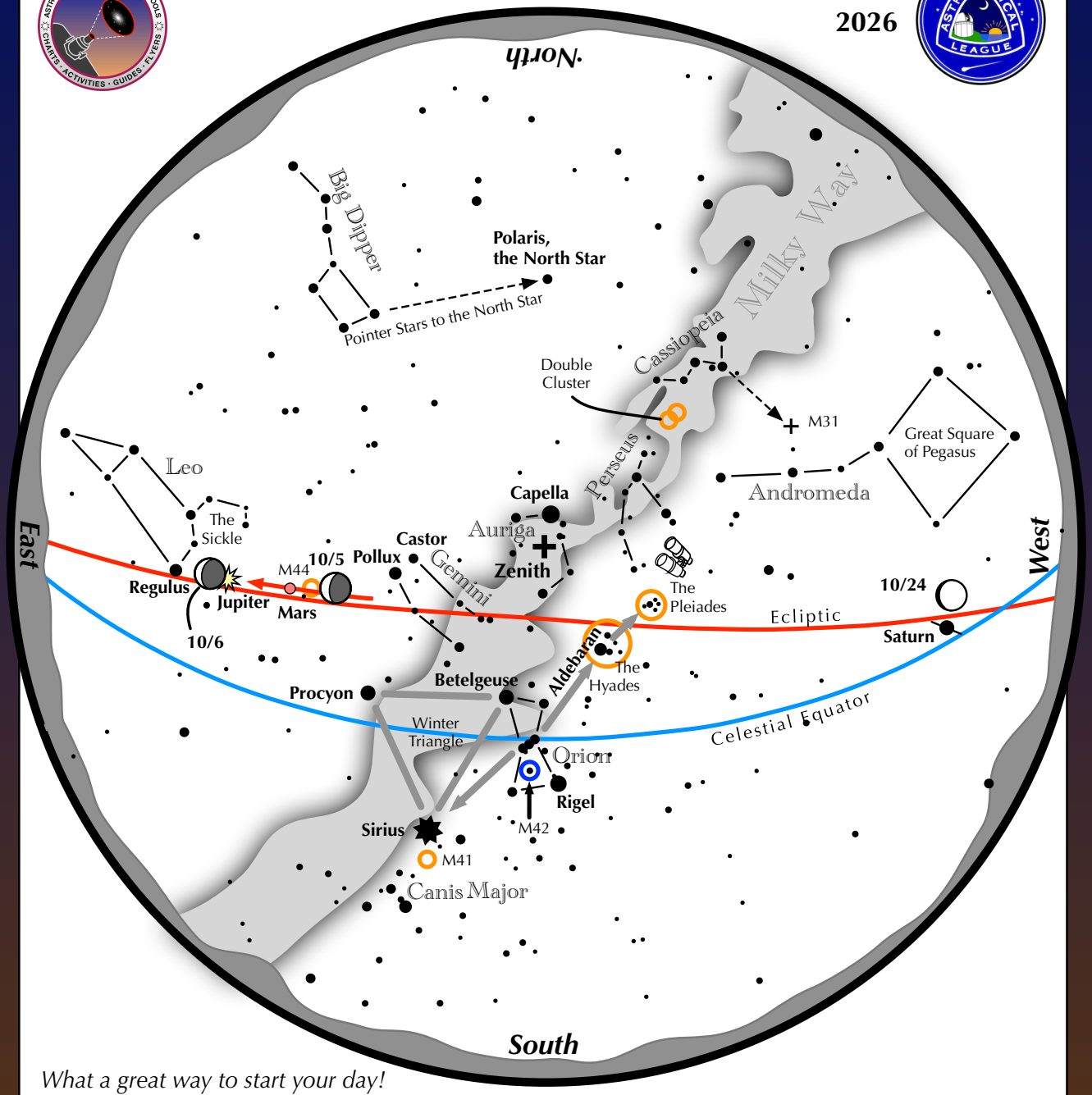
Navigating the mid October Morning Sky

2026



What a great way to start your day!

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid October at 5:00 a.m.

Late sunrises in October provide opportunities for early morning skywatching.

- Bright Jupiter shines high in the east.
- Crescent moon lies just west of Mars on October 5.
- The crescent moon glows next to and occults bright Jupiter on October 6.
- The near full moon glows in the west next to Saturn on October 24.
- During the first half of October, gaze high in the south and overhead to see these many celestial features: the Pleiades, the Hyades with Aldebaran, Orion, Capella and Auriga, the Winter Triangle with Sirius and Procyon, Gemini, and, in the east, Jupiter.

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What's Up, Doc? †

Dr. Aaron B. Clevenson, Director, Insperity Observatory

This document tells you what objects are visible this 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 Standard Time for Boise, Idaho

Constellations, Northern Skies – any night, any time, anywhere, the darker the sky the better.
Last Chance this cycle: Serpens, Ophiuchus, Sagittarius, Corona Australis.**Transit**: Cepheus, Lacerta, Cygnus, .Vulpecula, Pegasus, Delphinus, Equuleus, Aquarius, Capricorn, Piscis Austrinus, Microscopium
New arrivals: Perseus, Aries, Triangulum, Cetus, Sculptor, Grus.

Binocular Clubs

Binocular Messier – Monthly highlights include:
Easy – 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 31, 34, 39, 52, 55, 92, 103.
Medium – 14, 28, 30, 33.
Hard – 9, 26, 32, 54, 56, 71, 75, 101.
Big Binoculars –69, 70, 72, 102, 110.

Deep Sky Binocular – Monthly highlights include (by Astronomical League numbers):
1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60.

Other Clubs
Messier
In addition to those listed under Binocular Messier, check out: 21, 57, 73, 74, 76.

Caldwell - 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 33, 34, 37, 42, 43, 44, 47, 51, 55, 56, 57, 62, 63, 65, 68.

Double Star (by Astronomical League numbers): 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 24, 26, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 84, 88, 89, 90, 96.

Solar System – These are the tasks that can be done this month:

Sun – Any clear day is a good time to get those sunspots. Sunset is at 1830.

Moon:
The Maria requirement can be done any time the moon is visible. Look before 10/3 and after 10/17 for the fullest views. The Highlands requirement can be done at the same time. The Crater Ages requirement is best done on 10/16 and 10/17. The Scarps requirement is best done on 10/18. Occultations occur all the time, the bright ones can be found on the internet. Objects disappear on the east side of the moon.

Lunar: Key timings are indicated **| New, 10/10 4 days, 10/14 7 days, 10/17 10 days, 10/20 14 days, 10/24**
Old moon in new moons arms – before 0950 on 10/13, ~10 % illuminated. (72 hr > New) **New moon** in old moons arms – after 0950 on 10/7, ~10 % illuminated. (72 hr < New) **Waxing Crescent** – before 0950 on 10/12, ~4 % illuminated. (40 hr > New) **Waning Crescent** – after 0950 on 10/8, ~4 % illuminated. (48 hr < New)

Asteroids – Course Plotting and Measuring Movement requirements can be done at any time on any asteroid.

Venus, Mars, Ceres, and Jupiter are not visible in the evening sky. **Mercury** is in Libra and Sets at 19:40 mid-month **Saturn** is in Cetus and is up all evening mid-month. **Uranus** is in Taurus and rises at 2052 mid-month. **Neptune** is in Pisces and is up all evening mid-month. **Pluto** is in Capricornus and is up all evening mid-month.

***-** Although these clubs are not detailed in this "What's Up Doc?" handout, you can get information on many of their objects by using the "What's Up Tonight, Doc?" spreadsheet (version 4.1). To get your copy, talk to the Doc, Aaron Clevenson, by sending an email to aaron@clevenson.org.

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Websites and Other Helpful Astronomy Links.

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...t/future-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

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://telescopius.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

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

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