

The Prairie Astronomer

July, 2026 Volume 67, Issue #7



IN THIS ISSUE: NSP PHOTOS
NASA FINDS NEAR-EARTH ASTEROID IS A COMET



THE **Prairie**
Astronomy
Club

Night Sky Network



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB



*David Woolf, Kalamazoo, MI at NSP 2018
Photo by Mark Dahmke*

Next regular meeting: Tuesday July 28th 7:30pm at Hyde Observatory

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on July 28th at 7:30pm. We will show photos taken at the Nebraska Star Party.

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Cover: Milky Way at NSP by Brett Boller

M31 by Brett Boller



Most of our club meetings are held at Hyde Memorial Observatory in Holmes Park.

The Observatory is owned and maintained by the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, but is operated by volunteers, many of whom are also members of the Prairie Astronomy Club.

2026 STAR PARTY DATES

	Date	Date
January	9	<u>16</u>
February	13	<u>20</u>
March	13	<u>20</u>
April	10	<u>17</u>
May	8	<u>15</u>
June	5	<u>12</u>
July	10	<u>17</u>
NSP	7/12-7/17	
August	7	<u>14</u>
September	4	<u>11</u>
October	2	<u>9</u>
November	<u>6</u>	13
December	4	<u>11</u>

Underlined dates are closest to the New Moon.

CALENDAR



July Meeting

Tuesday, July 28th, 7:30pm, Hyde Observatory

Program: NSP Review

August Meeting

Tuesday, August 25th, Hyde Observatory

September Meeting

Tuesday, September 29th, Hyde Observatory

PAC Google calendar:

<https://www.prairieastronomyclub.org/event-calendar/>

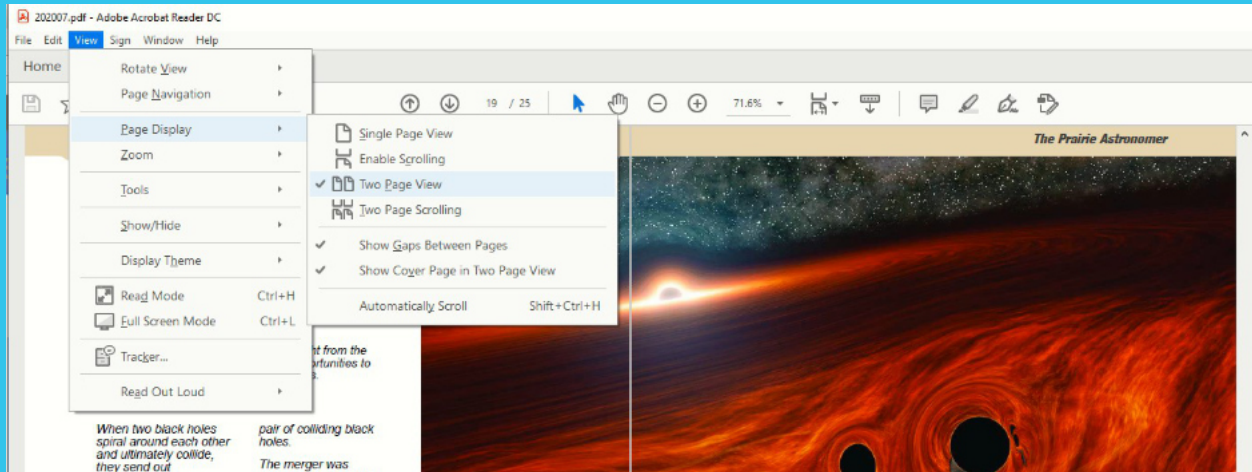
CLUB OFFICERS

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NOTICES

Newsletter Page View Format

How to Adjust Adobe Acrobat Settings for Two Page View



To view this newsletter in magazine spread format in Acrobat, select View ->Page Display->Two Page View. Acrobat will then show two pages side by side. Also make sure the checkboxes “Show Cover Page in Two Page View” and “Show Gaps Between Pages” are checked. If you have it setup correctly, the cover page will be displayed by itself and subsequent pages will be side by side with the odd numbered pages on the left.

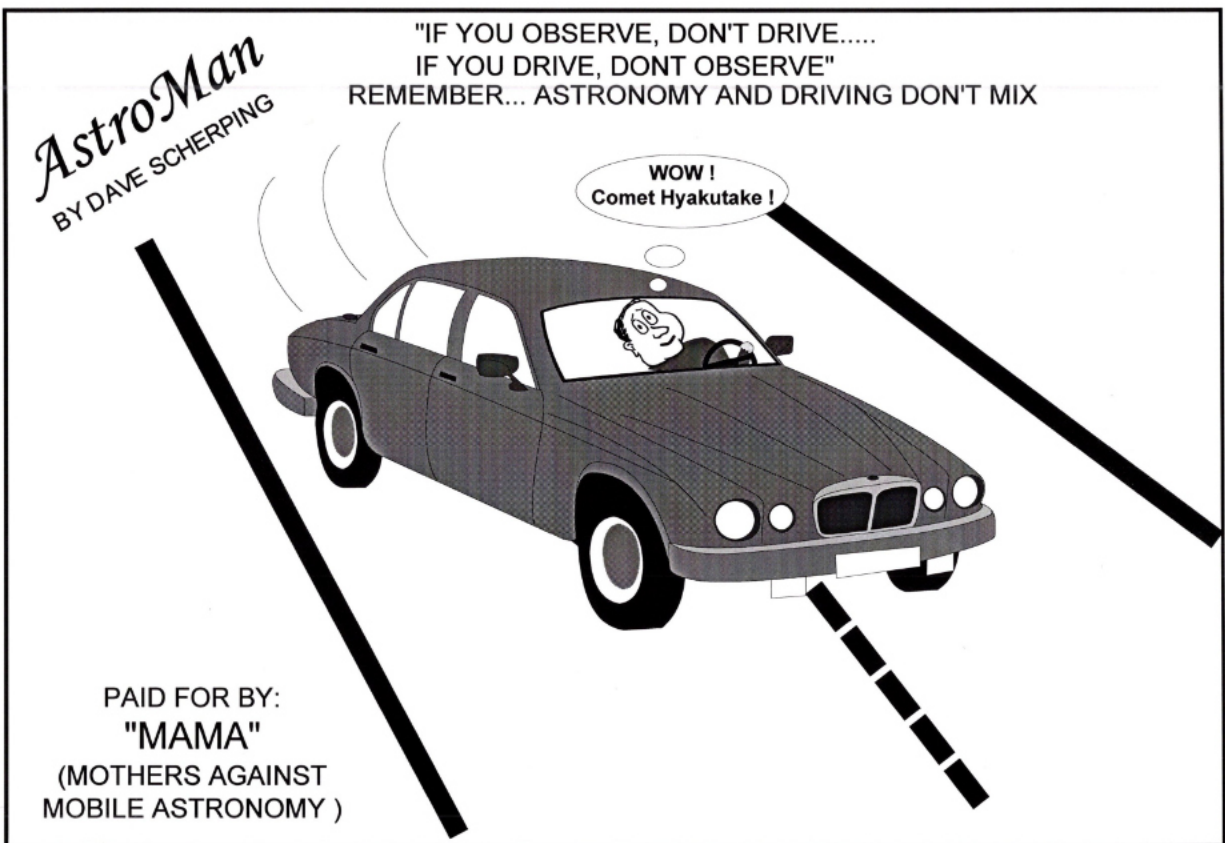
Pay Dues

<https://www.prairieastronomyclub.org/pay-dues-online/>

If you're already a member and are renewing within 30 days of your anniversary date, select the early renewal option for a discount.

PAC-LIST

Subscribe through GoogleGroups or contact Mark Dahmke to be added to the list. You'll need a Google/ gmail account, but if you want to use a different email address, just associate that address with your google account to access Google Groups. Once subscribed, you can view message history through the GoogleGroups website. To post messages to the list, send to this address: pac-list@googlegroups.com



Scherping, 1996

ARP 95

The Mantrap Skies Image Catalog

Arp 95 is a triple galaxy system located in Bootes about 425 million light-years from us. Arp put these under Galaxies with companions on arms: Elliptical galaxy companions. By this, the lower one to the right isn't included. Still many consider it part of Arp 95. It is IC 4461. The larger or the two Arp refers to is IC 4462. Both were discovered by Stephane Javelle on June 22, 1895. IC 4461 is not classed at NED. Seligman says it is SBc?. Its redshift puts it twice as distant as the two true members of Arp 94. The elliptical has the same redshift as the big spiral so certainly is a member of the group 860 million light-years while the other two are at 420 million light-years.

The two true members of Arp 95 are IC 4462 a SBb starburst galaxy and PGC 52123 an elliptical galaxy. My image may show a faint hint of a connection between the two. The only other hint of distortion is that there appears to be a weak tidal plume off the northwestern arm of the spiral, opposite the elliptical. Was it caused by the companions? I found nothing to help answer this. Arp's



Rick Johnson

Rick Johnson, a founding member of the Prairie Astronomy Club, passed away in January, 2019. His legacy lives on through his comprehensive catalog of over 1600 images at www.mantrapskies.com.



ARP 95, continued

comment reads: "Star-like condensation in spiral. Connection to E galaxy inferred, not seen." The "star-like condensation" turns out to be just that, a foreground star. At least the SDSS lists it as a star and it appears to be a star in the Sloan image. While enlarged by seeing in my image it shows the typical PSF (point spread function) of a star rather than a star cloud or galaxy so I agree with the Sloan image. It is quite obvious in my image to the upper right of the galaxy's core.

Some sources consider the elliptical IC 4462 and the big spiral IC 4461. Looking at Javelle's positions (not quite correct but likely consistent as to their error since they were made at the same time) I go with IC 4462 being the spiral Arp refers to and 4461 being the spiral to the southwest. Here's a link showing Javelle's positions precessed to

2000 coordinates <http://cseligman.com/text/atlas/j1326.1327.jpg>. Webb and Kanipe identify the galaxies with the two northern galaxies being the IC entries. Dennis Webb has told me such mix-ups were common. Determining who was right was often impossible but trying to be as accurate as possible delayed the book by a year or more.

There is little on the rest of the field. The galaxy to the left in the enlarged, cropped image is MAPS-NGP O_326_3139474.

This plate measurement catalog is the only entry in NED for this rather major galaxy compared to most of the field. NED shows no entry for it in the SDSS or any other catalog. Though the SDSS does list the star to its northwest. Having nothing more than what the automated plate measurement comes up with there is no distance estimate for it or any

other galaxy in the field. This is really a dead zone as far as information goes.

When taking this, one red frame was lost to clouds so I retook it after the clouds cleared and the other color frames were shot. Or I tried to. Somehow I told the software to take a blue frame rather than red and didn't catch it until now. So this one has one red, two green and 3 blue frames thanks to my error. This did make getting decent red in the image difficult and likely explains why the elliptical is more white than yellow-orange of a typical elliptical. Though on the SDSS image it is a much paler color than usual for ellipticals using their 7 color scheme that includes three near-infrared channels that turns most ellipticals far redder than they really are. So my color may not be as red deficient as it appears. Another for the retake list, however.

NSP Photos

Brett Boller



NSP Photos



NSP Photos



NSP Photos

Jim Kvasnicka



NSP Photos



Focus on Constellations: Lyra

Jim Kvasnicka

Lyra, the Lyre is one of the smallest constellations but it contains some big attractions. Vega is the brightest star in the summer and the fifth brightest of all the stars. Lyra has a wondrous deep sky object in M57, the Ring Nebula, one of the most observed and photographed objects in the night sky. Lyra has one other Messier object in the globular cluster M56. Epsilon Lyrae, the Double Double is a favorite telescope object. Lyra has its own meteor shower in the Lyrids which can be seen April 20-22 each year. Lyra is also prominent in astronomy history. Vega was the first star to have its picture taken in 1850. It was also one of the first stars to have its parallax accurately determined. Vega also will play a role in future astronomy history as well. In about 12,000 years Vega will assume the title of North Star.

Showpiece Objects

Planetary Nebulae: M57

Globular Clusters: M56

Multiple Stars: Epsilon-1/Epsilon-2 (Double Double)

Mythology

Classical mythology links the lyre and the tortoise shell with the story of Mercury, who found a tortoise shell. He noticed the resonance when he tapped on the shell. This gave him an idea to drill holes in the shell along opposite ends. He then laced the holes with linen threads. The lyre was invented and Mercury played enchanting music. Apollo beseeched Mercury to teach him to play. Mercury traded the lyre to Apollo for the power to fly and Mercury became the swift messenger of the gods with his winged sandals. Apollo gave the lyre to his son, Orpheus, who learned to play with such talent that his music would soothe the wild

beasts. After the death of Orpheus, Jupiter placed the lyre in the heavens.

Number of Objects Magnitude 12.0 and Brighter

Galaxies: 3

Globular Clusters: 1

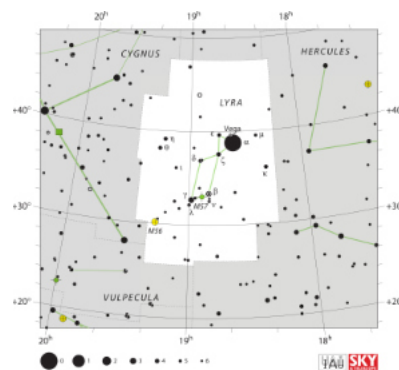
Open Clusters: 2

Planetary Nebulae: 2

Dark Nebulae: 0

Bright Nebulae: 0

SNREM: 0



By IAU and Sky & Telescope magazine (Roger Sinnott & Rick Fienberg) - [1], CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15407534>

August Observing

Jim Kvasnicka

This is a partial list of objects visible for the upcoming month.

Planets

Mercury: Morning planet in Cancer at -1.2 magnitude.

Venus: Evening planet at -4.4 magnitude, sets 50 minutes after the Sun.

Mars: Morning planet in Gemini at +1.3 magnitude with a disk 4.8" wide.

Jupiter: Morning planet in Cancer at magnitude -1.8 with a disk 31.8" wide.

Saturn: Morning planet in Pisces at magnitude +0.5 with a disk 19.3" wide.

Uranus and Neptune: Morning planets.

Meteor Showers

Perseids: Peaks the night of August 12-13 but are active from mid-July to late August. From a dark site expect up to 100 per hour. The Moon is at new phase and won't interfere.

Messier List

M6/M7: Open clusters in Scorpius.

M8: The Lagoon Nebula in Sagittarius.

M9/M10: Class VIII and VII globular clusters in Ophiuchus.

M12/M19: Class IX and VIII globular clusters in Ophiuchus.

M20: The Trifid Nebula in Sagittarius.

M21/M23: Open clusters in Sagittarius.

M62/M107: Class IV and X globular clusters in Ophiuchus.

Last Month: M3, M4, M5, M53, M68, M80, M83

Next Month: M13, M14, M22, M28, M54, M69, M70, M92

NGC and other Deep Sky Objects

NGC 6717: Palomar 9, Class VIII globular cluster in Sagittarius.

NGC 6741: Planetary nebula in Aquila.

NGC 6781: Planetary nebula in Aquila.



NGC 6818: Little Gem, planetary nebula in Sagittarius.

B86: The Ink Spot, dark nebula in Sagittarius.

Double Star Program List

Struve 2404: Close pair of orange stars in Aquila.

57 Aquilae: Pair of white stars.

Beta Cygni: Albireo, gold and blue stars.

31 Cygni: Yellow primary with a blue secondary.

61 Cygni: Two orange stars.

Epsilon Lyrae: The Double Double.

Zeta Lyrae: Yellow pair.

Beta Lyrae: Yellow primary with multiple white stars.

Challenge Object

NGC 6822: Barnard's Galaxy in Sagittarius.

Club Outreach

Don Hain

dhain00@gmail.com

402-440-5318

The big outreach event in July of course was the Nebraska Star Party. I have only had the chance to be part of the event once (a couple years ago), but I look forward to heading back in the future. Hopefully you were able to make it up to north central Nebraska, meet some wonderful folks, and get some views of Nebraska's amazing night sky. Below is some summary information about what can be found and what is going on (including some links if you want more detail).

That middle part of the state around I-80 northward will continue to attract attention as a destination for folks seeking to see what the universe looked like to man prior to the invention of electricity. Besides PAC and OAS, members of the Platte Valley Astronomical Society (PVAO) continue to provide assistance to

maintain awareness and the designation of the 729 acres around Merritt as a region with Dark Sky Park status. That state recreation area is part of more than 9,000 acres of federal and state lands in that area.

<https://flatwaterfreepress.org/trashed/>

<https://outdoornebraska.gov/location/merritt-reservoir/>

Last but not least, down by Halsey, while I have not heard of any attempts to pursue formal Dark Sky designations, the work to recover from the Bovee fire that burned down the 4H camp continues. That work does include plans to provide an area for stargazing. The area expected to be designated for astronomy interests is shown in the lower right corner of the included picture (the



“sandhillsexpress.com” link below is where the picture was taken from).

<https://www.ne4hfoundation.org/sandhills-discovery-center/> (The timeline presented here is overly aggressive. The project will take longer.)

<https://sandhillsexpress.com/local-news/slow-but-determined-progress-continues-to-re-build-at-the-nebraska-national-forest-near-halsey/>

Additionally, Nebraska has land that is managed by The Nature Conservancy up on the Niobrara to the east of Valentine. A Dark Sky designation is being pursued for that area of the state as well. That area is called the Niobrara Valley Preserve. It consists of 56,000 acres.

Club Outreach

<https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/n/v/NVPWholeMap.pdf>

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/niobrara-valley-preserve/>

<https://southeast.newschannelnebraska.com/story/233402033/niobrara-valley-preserve-near-norden-pursuing-dark-sky-designation>

When chatting with folks about the nighttime sky, I think we have every

right to proclaim that Nebraska has more to offer than many places in this country when it comes to considering our place amongst the stars. If the designation for the Niobrara Valley Preserve does in fact get approved (and if it includes the entire preserve), that would be an area more than 75 times as large as the Merritt Dark Sky Park. As I interpret the map of the Valley Preserve, it stretches from land just to the south and west of Smith Falls on the Niobrara nearly to the

Meadville Bridge that crosses the Niobrara 21 miles north of Ainsworth. We still continue to hide the stars with many of our lighting practices, there are some things happening to draw attention to the beauty of our night skies.

Beyond the state star party, Hyde Observatory will continue to be the main area of outreach PAC is involved with through these remaining months of summer, along with the chats you may have with neighbors and friends.



Club Outreach

Upcoming event(s):

Hyde Observatory: OPEN

When: Saturday nights ... and other nights for groups per request

Where: Hyde Observatory

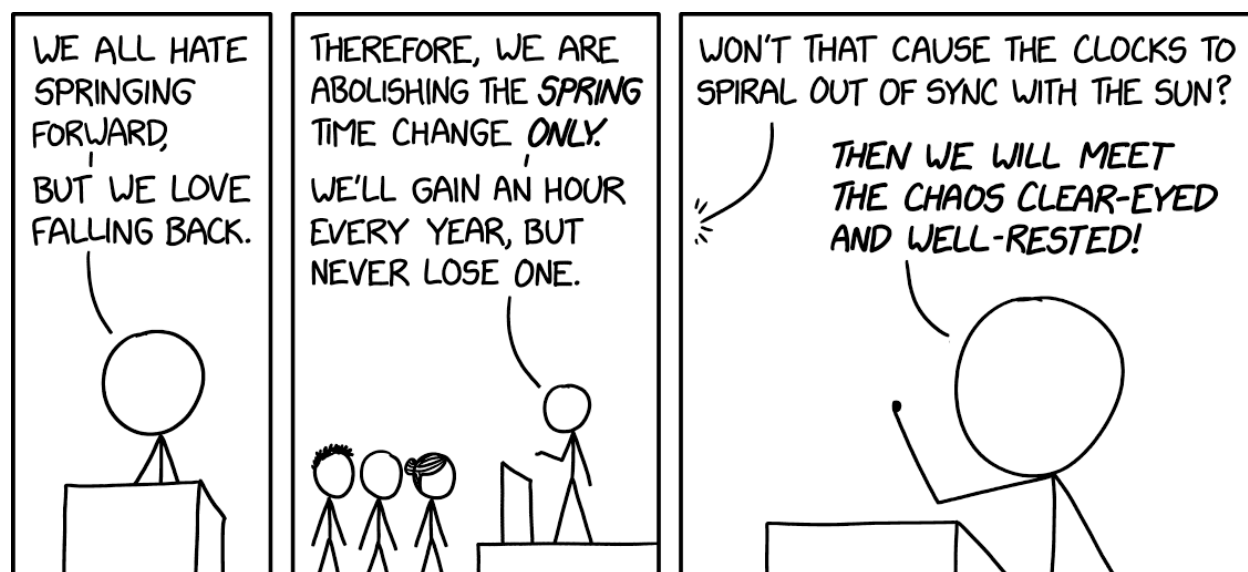
Sponsored by: Lincoln Parks and Rec / Hyde Board of Directors

Special Group nights: per requests to Pioneers Park Nature Center at 4024417895 or naturecenter@lincoln.ne.gov

Needs: volunteers willing to work out on the deck or manage the shows in the classroom about one Saturday per month, or nights scheduled by request of a group

See <https://www.hydeobservatory.info/volunteer/> for more information

See <https://forms.gle/ZKr4ivapvUhfejwL6> for the volunteer form to get paperwork with the city started. Since Hyde offers the activity through city government a background check is needed. Submission of this form will get that going.

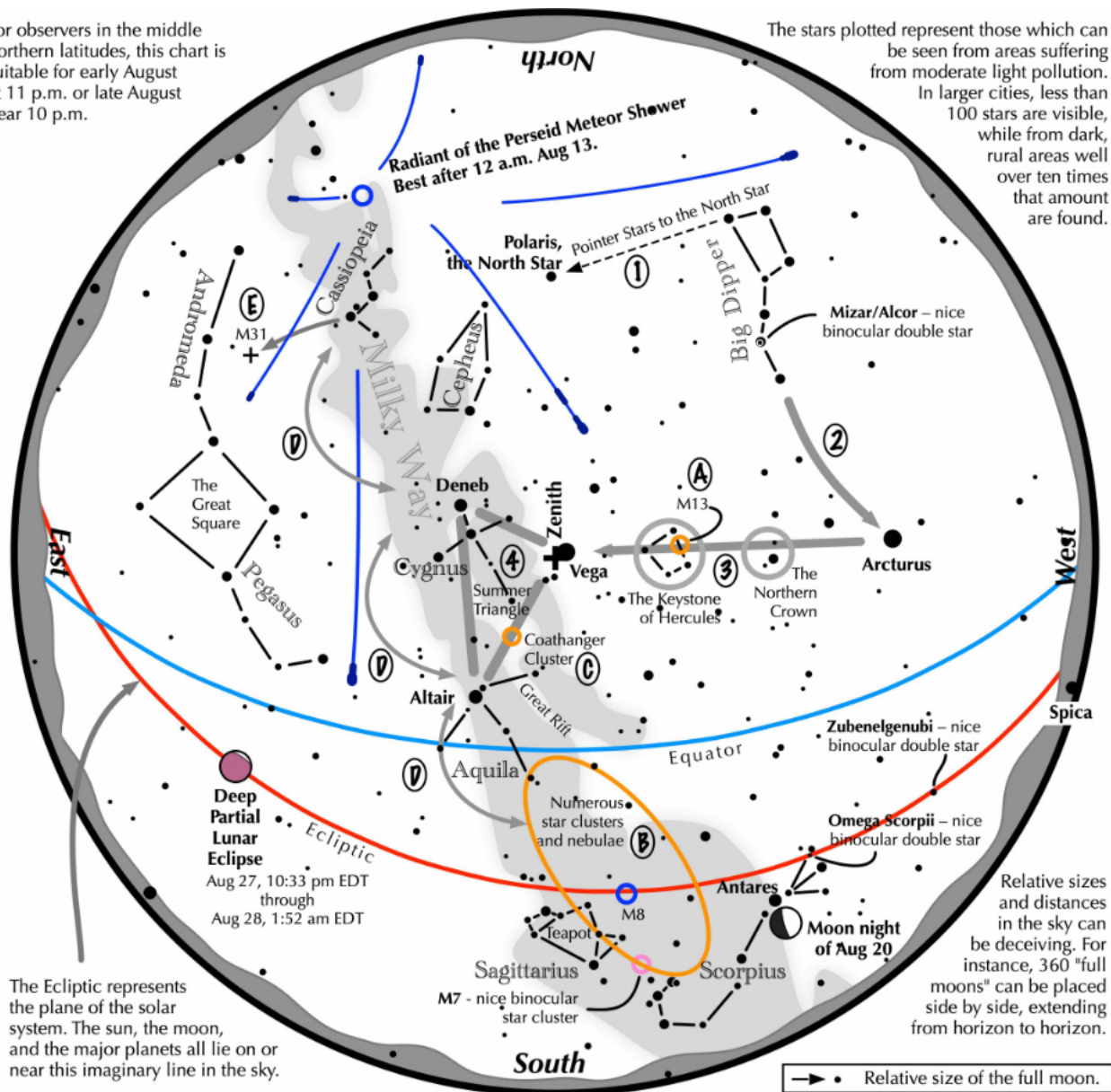


xkcd.com

Navigating the August Night Sky

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for early August at 11 p.m. or late August 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 from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



Navigating the mid August 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 June 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 High in the East lie the summer triangle stars of Vega, Altair, and Deneb.

Binocular Highlights

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





Enhance your view of the thin crescent of Venus

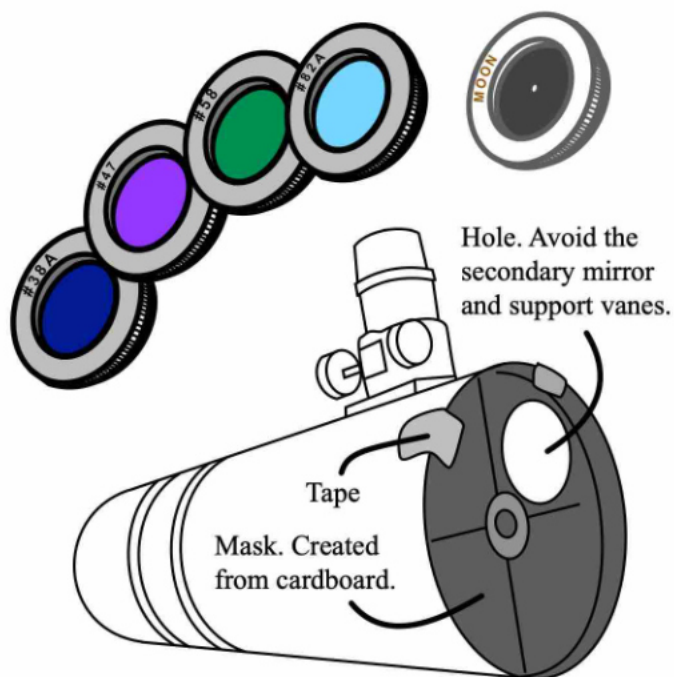
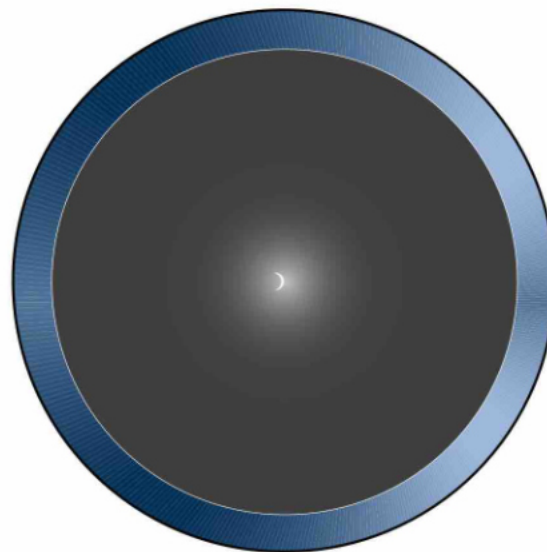


Venus is bright. So bright that's its glare becomes interfering, especially when viewed in its beautiful crescent phase. Many people see it as a bright blur.

For a more satisfying view, take one or more of these steps:

1. Place a **moon filter** over the eyepiece.
2. Depending on telescope aperture, try **colored filters** such as #38A (dark blue), #47 (violet), and #58 (green). #82A (light blue) works well in general. They may bring out very subtle details in that planet's cloudtops.

Because they transmit little light, the darker filters are better suited for apertures greater than 8-inches.

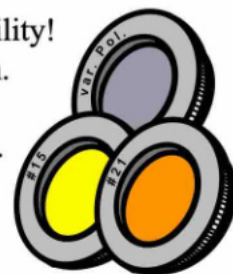


3a. Use an **aperture mask**. Since Venus is bright – really *too* bright – reducing the effective aperture won't hurt viewing. Doing so will also increase the scope's f ratio.

3b. If an SCT or reflector is used that has an aperture of 8-inches or larger, place an **off-axis mask** over the entrance of the optical tube. (Smaller apertures won't have the spacing for large enough holes.) Center the hole in the mask so that light enters the optical tube unobstructed, avoiding the secondary mirror and any vanes. The result – a dimmer, but sharper image.

4. Daytime viewing. Being higher above the horizon just might improve viewability!

- Place the sun behind a building. Make sure you can't inadvertently view the sun.
- Find the alt-az coordinates of Venus and its elongation from the sun.
- Scan that area of the sky with binoculars. Once you spot it, aim your scope at it.
- Consider using a variable polarizing filter, a Wratten #15 (deep yellow), or a #21 (orange) filter to improve sky contrast.





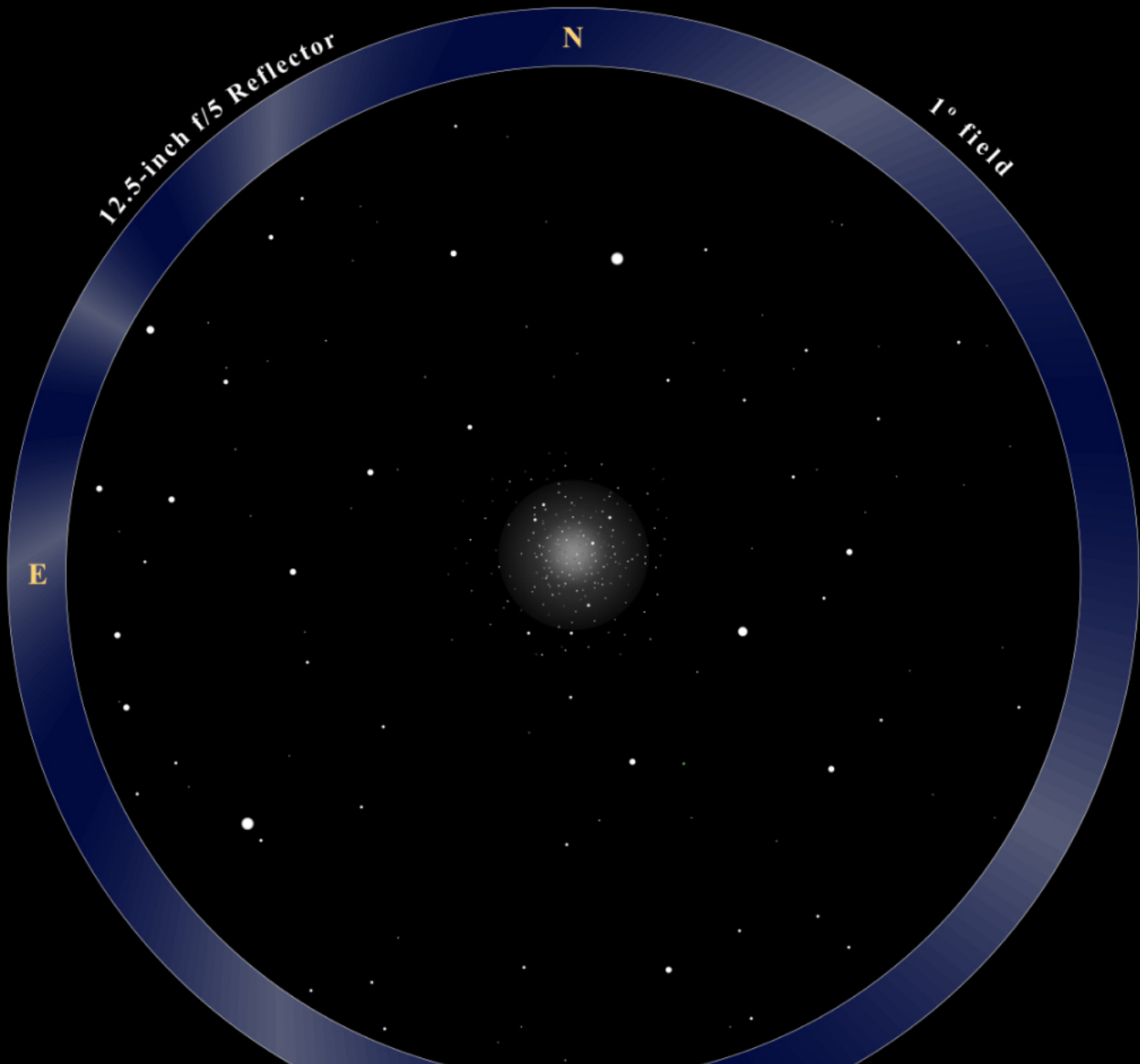
Authentic Observing Experience: M10



Wide field, low power eyepiece view

If you wonder why someone is excited to have a chance at the eyepiece, try visualizing what they will experience and what they will see. After all, an eyepiece view of a celestial wonder is much different than looking at an astro-image. **It is active. It is personal. It is real.**

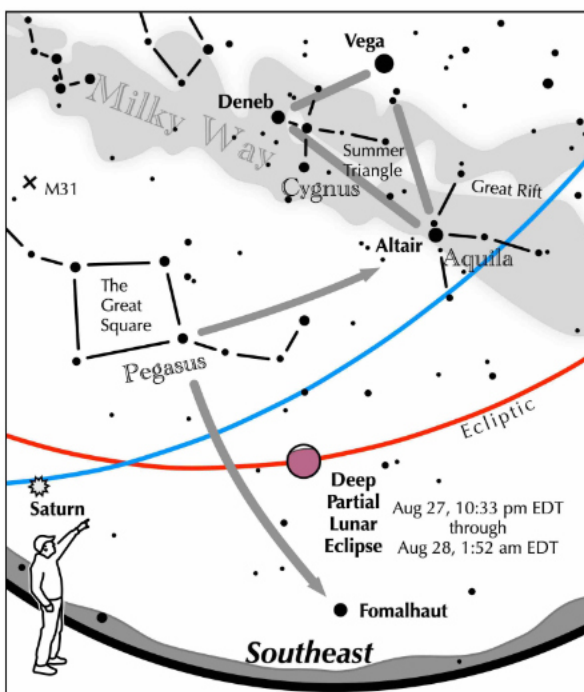
Hold this screen as close to you as you can while still seeing a focused image.



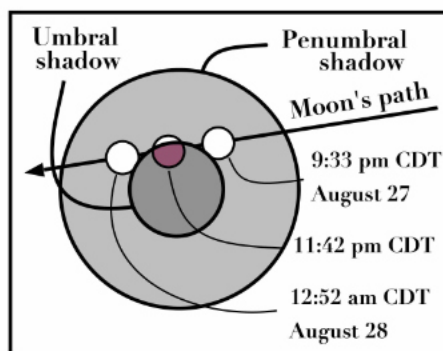
**Witnessing scenes like this is one reason why we do what we do.
This is one aspect of the Authentic Observing Experience.**

Astronomical League Outreach

If you can observe only one celestial event in the evening this August, see this one.



View to the southeast
on August 27-28
Mid eclipse: Aug 27, 11:42 pm CDT



The Moon slides through a deep partial eclipse

In the late evening hours on August 27 into the early morning hours on August 28, the brilliant full moon slides into Earth's shadow.

- Even though the partial umbral eclipse begins at 9:33 pm CDT on Aug 27, any dark bite might not be noticed for another 5 minutes.
- At mid eclipse (11:42 pm CDT Aug 27) when 93% of the moon lies in the umbral shadow, what color is the moon? How red is it?
- Do you notice that the shadow's edge is not straight, but curved?

Partial Lunar Eclipse

Jim Kvasnicka

August 27-28, Thursday - Friday

96.2% of the Moon will be covered by Earth's umbra

August 27	8:23:58 pm	Penumbra Eclipse Begins
August 27	9:33:54 pm	Partial Eclipse Begins
August 27	11:12:53 pm	Maximum Eclipse
August 28	12:51:59 am	Partial Eclipse Ends
August 28	2:01:47 am	Penumbra Eclipse Ends

NASA Study Finds Near-Earth Asteroid Is Actually Comet

New research led by scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California has revealed the identity of a puzzling near-Earth object by precisely tracking its motion through space and using powerful observatories

that image faint celestial objects.

This object has a dual personality: Past images hadn't revealed obvious cometlike activity, suggesting it might be an asteroid, but its motion recently proved to be irregular like that of a

comet. The scientists detailed their findings in a study published in the journal *Nature Astronomy*.

The puzzle began on Aug. 28, 2025, when the object, provisionally known as the asteroid 1998 SH2, passed safely



This artist's concept depicts a near-Earth asteroid with an elongated orbit. A few objects such as these can exhibit significant perturbations in their motion around the Sun and, like the asteroid 1998 SH2, could turn out to be regular comets with a w... Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Asteroid, continued

within 2 million miles (3 million kilometers) of our planet during its 4½-year orbit around the Sun. Researchers looking to observe 1998 SH2 with NASA's Deep Space Network (DSN) planetary radar system had calculated its position using data from previous orbits and factored in the effects that the gravity of the Sun and planets would have on its path. But when 1998 SH2 didn't show up where they expected, they realized that something unanticipated had been influencing the object's motion.

Object tracking

By using optical astrometry to precisely measure the object's position in the sky, the researchers were able to identify the cause.

"After we measured the nongravitational perturbations affecting the motion of 1998 SH2

and recognized they weren't compatible with the object being an asteroid, we suspected the object could be an active comet," said Davide Farnocchia, a navigation engineer with NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies at JPL and study lead.

Although 1998 SH2's orbit around the Sun had been well-tracked from 1998 to 2016, the object had completed two solar orbits without additional observations by telescopes until the 2025 DSN attempts. Analyzing all observations collected since the object's discovery in 1998, researchers determined the perturbations to 1998 SH2's motion and hypothesized that the object may be generating a small thrust by venting gas into space, causing it to deviate from its predicted path.

This venting results from the Sun heating ice

mixed with rocky material, turning the ice into a gas. With regular comets, this activity forms a trademark bright tail and coma — the gas and dust surrounding a comet's nucleus. But when an object produces gas and dust in much smaller quantities, its tail and coma may not be detectable to most observatories.

Tail, coma emerge

The August 2025 close approach to Earth of 1998 SH2 provided the perfect opportunity for the paper's authors to gather observational evidence of visible cometary activity. They reached out to astronomers at the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope, a 3.6-meter (12-foot) optical/infrared telescope near the summit of Mauna Kea, Hawaii, and the 1.5-meter (5-foot) European Southern Observatory's Danish Telescope in La Silla, Chile, to observe. Astronomers at the

Asteroid, continued

powerful European Southern Observatory's 8.2-meter (27-foot) Very Large Telescope on the Chilean mountain Cerro Paranal also tracked the object.

"The images we collected from these observatories showed a weak but clear tail, thus confirming that 1998 SH2 is, in fact, a comet," said Olivier Hainaut, an astronomer with the European Southern Observatory and coauthor of the study. "That's how science works — you form a hypothesis, and you set out to test it. This data is exactly what was needed to confirm our hypothesis that 1998 SH2 was a comet."

As an outcome of the investigation, 1998 SH2 will receive an additional comet provisional designation, P/1998 SH2. Planetary defense implications

The research also sheds light on another, even

more unusual, class of objects called dark comets. Like 1998 SH2, dark comets exhibit significant irregularities, or perturbations, in their trajectory but lack other visible evidence of comet activity — there's no coma, tail, or visible outgassing. These enigmatic objects fall into two distinct populations: larger ones with orbits similar to those of Jupiter-family comets (short period comets with highly elliptical, or eccentric, orbits), and smaller ones that orbit closer to the Sun. Since the 2016 discovery of the first dark comet, about a dozen more have been identified.

The paper's authors suggest that many of the larger dark comets, which have orbits like 1998 SH2's, could turn out to be regular comets if astronomers get the right opportunity to observe them with powerful telescopes

capable of imaging incredibly faint objects. And by analyzing the motion of all near-Earth objects using precision astrometry data, researchers may reveal more comets that were previously designated as asteroids if they exhibit cometlike nongravitational perturbations.

"This work shows the importance of continuously tracking near-Earth objects," said Farnocchia. "Because of outgassing, the motion of comets is more significantly perturbed than that of asteroids. Detecting these perturbations can be an important diagnostic tool for planetary defense that will help understand which objects may be comets rather than asteroids, how their orbits evolve, and how that influences their Earth impact risks." Hunting for near-Earth objects

Asteroid, continued

NASA's upcoming Near-Earth Object (NEO) Surveyor will collect data that can be used to support this effort. The first space survey telescope to be built for planetary defense, this next-generation mission will seek out some of the hardest-to-find near-Earth objects, such as dark asteroids and comets that don't reflect much visible light.

NASA's Center for Near Earth Object Studies, the Goldstone Solar System Radar Group, and NEO Surveyor all are managed by JPL and supported by the agency's Planetary Defense Coordination Office in Washington. Caltech in Pasadena manages JPL for NASA. The DSN receives programmatic oversight from the SCaN (Space

Communications and Navigation) program office, also at NASA headquarters.

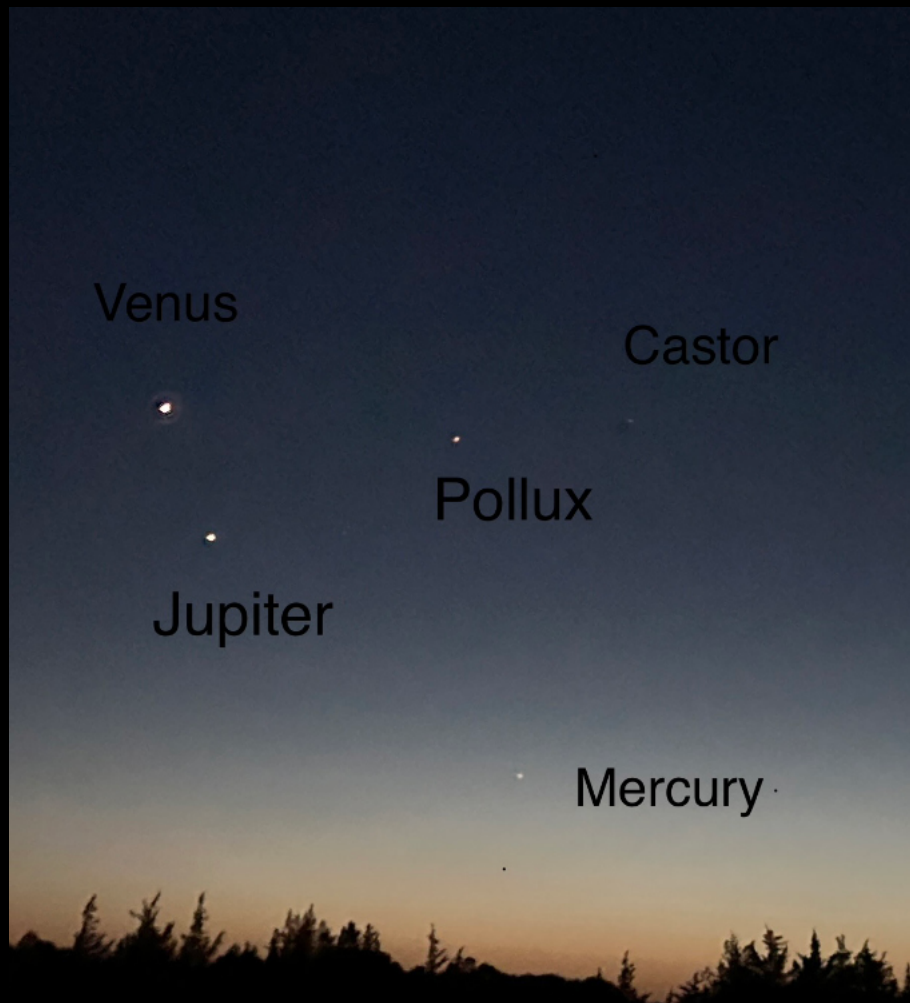
More information about planetary radar, NASA's Center for Near Earth Object Studies, and near-Earth objects can be found at:

<https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/asteroid-watch>



*Moon over Paradise by John Reinert
Nebraska Star Party*

Astrophotography



Mercury along with Venus, Jupiter, Pollux and Castor - by Jim White

Location - Taken at the Clatonia Recreation Area

Date - PAC Star Party on June 12th, 2026, Time - 10:08 PM

Camera - iPhone 14, Camera settings:, 26mm f1.5, ISO 8000, 1/15 second

Cropped and annotated on iPhone 14

Astrophotography



*Rotten Fish Nebula(LDN 1251)(left) & Dark Shark Nebula (LDN 1235)(right) LBN
Taken From Nebraska Star Party 7-17-2026 by Brett Boller
Redcat 51mm - ASI2600MC Duo - ZWO AM5n
99 - 180 sec images - 100 Darks - 100 Flats - 100 Dark Flats
Pixinsight - Photoshop*

Astrophotography



M20 by Aaron Keck

Total integration: 6h 42m

Integration per filter:

- No filter: 6h 42m (402 × 60")

Equipment: - Telescope: William Optics Gran Turismo 102 (f/7.7) / GTF102

- Camera: ZWO ASI533MC Pro

- Mount: Rainbow Astro RST-135E

Astrophotography



*Abstract Star Trails, by Scott Spaulding
SeeStar S30 Pro, 41 minutes, 13 July 2026, Nebraska Star Party
The 'red ribbon' is a father son pair walking, using their red lights to navigate*

Astrophotography



*July 14th. B72 Snake Nebula with
her 3 eggs B68, B69, and B70, by Bob Kacvinsky
SeeStar S50. 29 minutes of 20 sec subs. Non processed*

From the Archives, August 2005

Rick Johnson

Sorting through 59 years of stuff that has accumulated in this house since I moved in in 1946 I came across an early [1967] "Prairie Astronomer." The opening paragraph by Monte Cole caught my eye. Remember this is 10 years before Hyde. "It looks like we have finally found a site for our observatory! From the way things look now, the telescope will be located in the south section of Holmes Park, directly across from the Cedars Home. The club has held two star parties in this area. The sky conditions were poor for the first and so was attendance.

The second star party was a good one; the skies were clear and there were about 15 members out that night. Jess Williams, our secretary, has, though Thomas Pansing, contacted the City Park Commission. The Park Commission has promised to help as much as possible, in regard to providing land and helping with the building. Some of the club officers, along with Mr. Pansing, are going to meet with the Park Board on September 14 and discuss pending plans for the observatory -- IT LOOKS GOOD." Obviously this didn't pan out but I find my

memory totally blank on this one. I know we didn't really understand what it took to build such an observatory. I do remember going on a morning show at KOLN-TV to push it. Earl was there but I don't remember who the others were. Neither do I remember the star parties across from Cedars though we did do some for Cedars and maybe that is what Monte is referring to. It's interesting that the location is likely the site the Parks recently sold. The attached photo was taped into the newsletter. Someone, not me, printed enough of those to go into the newsletter. I would guess that was Jess Williams that did the printing and donated the cost. Left to right is Scott Coatsworth, Steve Kunkee, Earl Moser and I have no idea who the other person is with the camera [newspaper photographer]. Since we know Monte was there he likely took the picture.



ADDRESS

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The Prairie Astronomer is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc. Membership expiration date is listed on the mailing label. Membership dues are: Regular \$30/yr, Family \$35/yr. Address all new memberships and renewals to: The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc., PO Box 5585, Lincoln, NE 68505-0585. For other club information, please contact one of the club officers listed to the right. Newsletter comments and articles should be submitted to: Mark Dahmke, P. O. Box 5585, Lincoln, NE 68505 or mark@dahmke.com, no less than ten days prior to the club meeting. The Prairie Astronomy Club meets the last Tuesday of each month at Hyde Memorial Observatory in Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERSHIP INFO

REGULAR MEMBER - \$30 per year.
Includes club newsletter, and 1 vote at club meetings, plus all other standard club privileges.

FAMILY MEMBER - \$36 per year.
Same as regular member except gets 2 votes at club meetings.

STUDENT MEMBER - \$12 per year
with volunteer requirement.

Club members are also eligible for special subscription discounts on Sky & Telescope Magazine.



CLUB TELESCOPES

To check out one of the club telescopes, please contact a club officer. Scopes can be checked out at a regular club meeting and kept for one month. Checkout can be extended for another month if there are no other requests for the telescope, but you must notify a club officer in advance.

100mm Orion refractor: Available

10 inch Meade Starfinder Dobsonian:
Available.

13 inch Truss Dobsonian: Needs repair.

10 inch Zhumell: Needs mount.

Buy the book! The Prairie Astronomy Club: Fifty Years of Amateur Astronomy. Order online from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) or [lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com).