

MAY-JUNE 2012 NITE SKY

Moon Phases: New 5/20, FQ 5/28, Full 6/4, LQ 6/11, New 6/19, FQ 6/26.

Events: Sunset 5/20 partial annular eclipse, 5/31 evening in South Saturn is above Spica which is above waxing gibbous Moon. 6/6 transit of Venus across Sun @ 6:05 PM EDT, The last this century. 6/20 7:09 PM Summer Solstice arrives.

DRACO (DRAY-koh) The Dragon is a huge (8th largest @ 1083 sq. deg.), faint, circumpolar constellation from ancient times. It is the origin of the Quadrantids meteor shower around January 3rd & the Draconids around Oct. 9th. Its top feature is NGC 6543, one of the best Planetary Nebulae with blue-green color and 8th magnitude, but it takes high power magnification to resolve.

LYRA (LYE-rah) The Lyre is a small, beautiful, bright constellation placed in the sky by Zeus to honor Apollo's son Orpheus. The highlight is M57 the ring nebula, a famous planetary at least an 8" scope to bring out features in the width of 2 arc minutes. The ring is between Beta, an unusual eclipsing binary & Gamma. On the other end is Vega The Harp Star which is similar to Sirius and 3x larger than our sun but 58x more luminous, some 27 LY away. Near Vega is the double-double variable star Epsilon with a separation of 208 arcseconds.

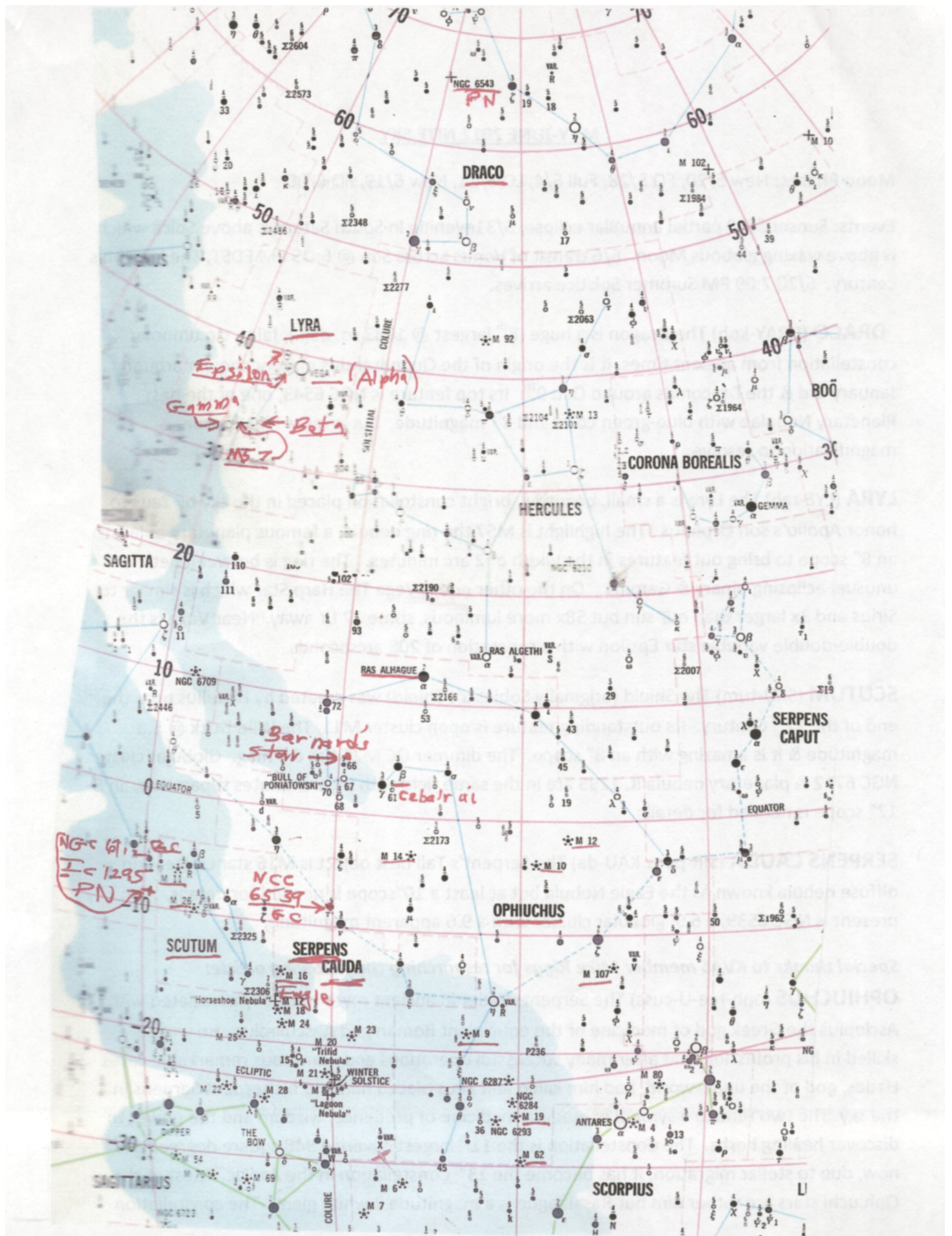
SCUTUM (SKU-tum) The Shield (originally Sobieski's Shield) was created by Hevelius near the end of the 17th Century. Its outstanding feature is open cluster M11, The Wild Duck @ 5.8 magnitude & it is amazing with an 8" scope. The dimmer OC M26 has 8.0 mag. Globular cluster NGC 6712 & planetary nebula IC 1295 are in the same field with 24 arcminutes separation, an 8-12" scope is needed for details

SERPENS CAUDA (SIR-penz KAU-da) The Serpent's Tail best object is M16 star cluster and diffuse nebula known as the Eagle Nebula but at least a 10" scope is needed for details. Also present is NGC 6539, a 6.9' globular cluster with a 9.6 apparent magnitude.

Special thanks to KVAS member Mike Riggs for researching the following article:

OPHIUCHUS (oph-fee-U-cuss) The Serpent Holder in ancient myth is usually associated with Asclepius the Greek god of medicine or the equivalent Roman god Aesculepius. He was so skilled in his profession that after many successful operations and numerous remarkable cures Hades, god of the underworld, had him killed and Zeus placed him and his serpent Serpens in the sky. The two remain a symbol in modern medicine of prudence, wisdom and the power to discover healing herbs. The Constellation is the 11th largest covering 948 square degrees and now, due to stellar migration, it has become the 13th Constellation in the Zodiac. Most of the Ophiuchi stars are rather dim but Rasalhague is a magnitude 2 white giant. The constellation

continued on back.



contains 21 of the 147 known globular Clusters, including M9, 10, 12, 14, 19, 62 & 107. Most of these GC's require a 6 to 8 inch scope for good details. Barnard's Star ia a 9.5 magnitude red dwarf only 6 LY away with the greatest known apparent motion across the sky, 10.3 sec, per