

## NITE SKY FOR AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2011

**Moon Phases:** Full 8/13, LQ 8/21, New 8/29, FQ 9/4, Full 9/12, LQ 9/20, New 9/27

**Planets:** Mercury visible dawn in Leo 8/27-9/18, Venus visible starting 9/21 in Virgo, Mars rises ~3 AM in Gemini, Saturn rises near Virgo at dusk, Jupiter rises around 10 PM in Aries, Neptune rises around midnight in Aquarius and Uranus is visible all night in Pisces.

**Events:** 9/17, Sat at 5PM Annual KVAS Picnic @ Breezy Pt. Observatory. 9/23 Autumnal Equinox 5:05 AM EDT. 10/20-22 BWF Annual KVAS Astronomy Weekend.

**CASSIOPEIA** (Kass-ee-oh-PEE-uh) The ancient Queen contains the unusual irregular variable star Gamma Cassiopeiae, normally the 3<sup>rd</sup> brightest in the constellation, which is losing mass to an outer shell. RZ is a better example of an eclipsing binary. Open cluster M52 is one of the richest with 100 stars and OC NGC 663 is small and faint but great in small telescopes.

**ANDROMEDA** (an-DROH-me-duh) The Chained Princess and daughter of Cassiopeia is also a constellation of the ancient legend of Perseus, Cepheus, & Pegasus. Its glory is M31 our nearest Galaxy with neighbors M32, a small compact galaxy and the larger & more diffuse M110 galaxy. The long period, red variable star R is a Mira type with light intensity variation of 9 magnitudes. At one time the asterism Gloria Frederika was a separate constellation, which included NGC 7662 the Blue Snowball (bluish-green) PN. Don't forget that the brightest star Alpheratz, Alpha And. is actually the corner star in the Great Square of Pegasus.

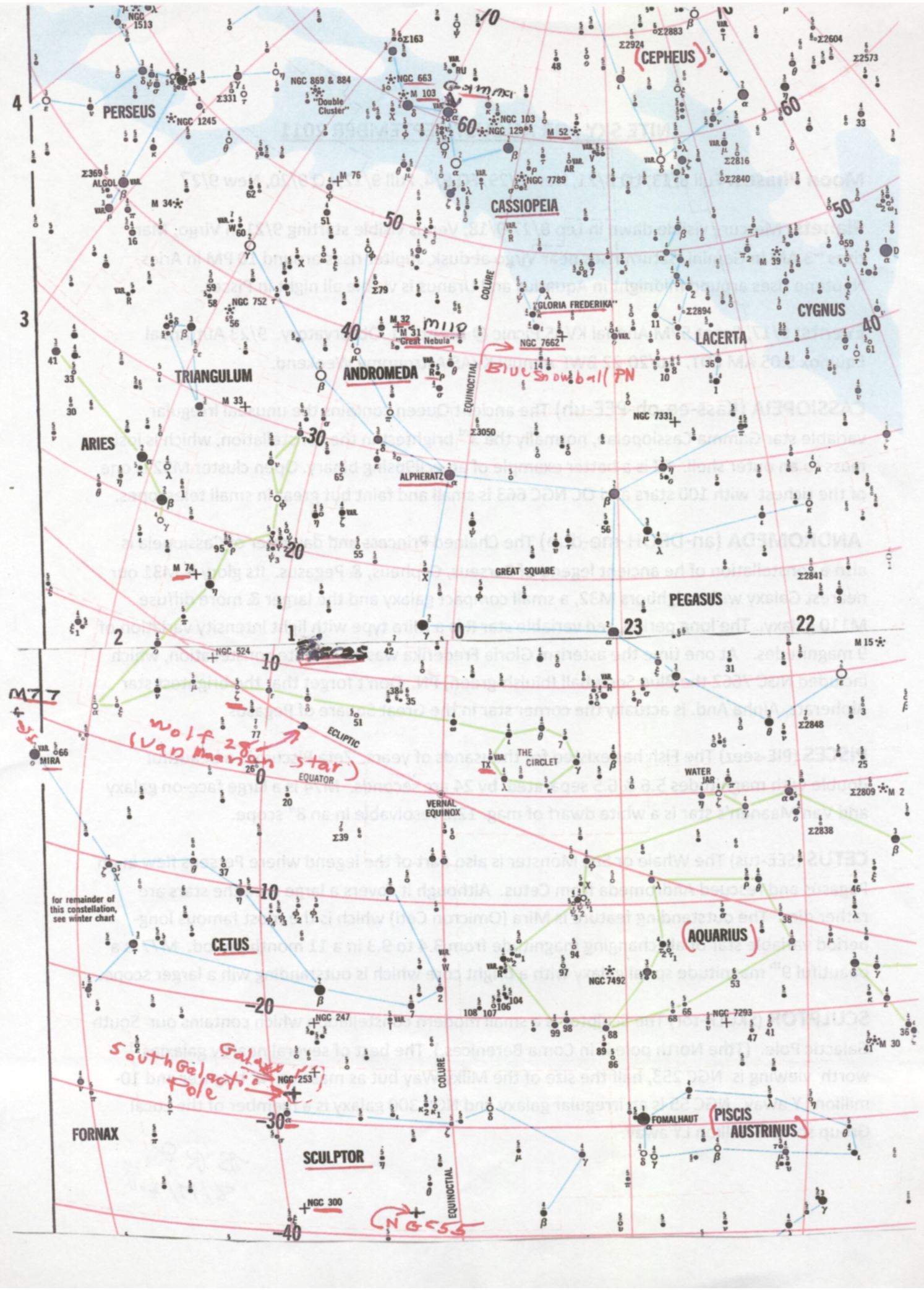
**PISCES** (PIE-seez) The Fish has existed for thousands of years. Zeta Piscium is a beautiful double with magnitudes 5.6 & 6.5 separated by 24 arc seconds. M74 is a large face-on galaxy and Van Maanen's star is a white dwarf of mag. 12.2 resolvable in an 8" scope.

**CETUS** (SEE-tus) The Whale or Sea Monster is also part of the legend where Perseus flew in on Pegasus and rescued Andromeda from Cetus. Although it covers a large area the stars are rather dim. The outstanding feature is Mira (Omicron Ceti) which is the most famous long-period variable star of all, changing magnitude from 3.4 to 9.3 in a 11 month period. M77 is a beautiful 9<sup>th</sup> magnitude spiral galaxy with a bright core which is outstanding with a larger scope.

**SCULPTOR** (SKULP-tor) The Sculptor is a small modern constellation which contains our South Galactic Pole. (The North pole is in Coma Berenices.) The best of several nearby galaxies worth viewing is NGC 253, half the size of the Milky Way but as massive, 4X brighter and 10-million LY away. NGC 55 is an irregular galaxy and NGC 300 galaxy is a member of the Local Group some 3 million LY away.

B.R.P.  
8/19/2011





PERSEUS

CASSIOPEIA

ANDROMEDA

ARIES

TRIANGULUM

PEGASUS

CYGNUS

LACERTA

CETUS

AQUARIUS

FORNAX

SCULPTOR

PISCIS AUSTRINUS

M77

Wolf 28  
(Van Maanen star)

THE CIRCLER

South Galactic Pole

NGC 55

Blue Snowball PN

for remainder of this constellation, see winter chart