

NITE SKY FOR MAY-JUNE 2011

Moon Phases: New 5/3, FQ 5/10, Full 5/17, LQ 5/24, New 1/6, FQ 8/6, Full 6/15, LQ 6/23.

Planets: To end of May see Venus, Jupiter & Mercury in E-NE as an AM trio but in June see Mars replace Mercury in the trio. Mercury reappears in evening 6/22 & on 6/30 it is W-NW in line with Castor & Pollux in Gemini. Uranus & Neptune appear predawn in Pisces & Aquarius respectively and Saturn is in S evenings in Virgo ½ degree left of Porrima, Gamma Virginis.

Events: 5/20-24 Dawn Mars is 1 degree above Venus with Mercury <4 deg. to lower left. We are still scheduled for the 5/25 Observatory Star Party with Richmond Elem. but need cleanup and power restored by then. 6/17 is our KVAS Meeting with CAAC meeting 6/18 Saturday Evening. 6/21 is the longest day in the year with the Summer Solstice @ 1:16 pm. The set-up crew for Star Quest goes up Sunday 6/23 and the event is from 6/29-7/2.

CYGNUS (SIG-nus) The Swan is an ancient and important constellation located in the band of the Milky Way in an area known as the Cygnus star cloud. Deneb, the "tail" star, Alpha Cygni, is one of the brightest stars being 60,000 times more luminous and 25 times more massive than the Sun. The most famous of the more than dozen multiple stars is Alberio, Beta Cygni, a bright gold & blue double (mag. 3.1 & 5.1) which can be easily seen with binocs since its separation is 34.4 arc sec. Cygnus has 28 open clusters including M29 & M39, easily seen with binocs. It has 11 planetary nebulae including the bright NGC 6826 and NGC 7027, an elliptical with bright blue-green color. Near Deneb is the large North American nebula NGC 7000 and to its left IC 5067-70, the Pelican Diff. Neb.

LYRA (LYE-rah) The lyre of Orpheus is a beautiful ancient but small constellation. Its brightest star Vega is a brilliant, hot, blue-white, standard AOV star, the 6th brightest in the sky. It's 3 times larger than the Sun, only 24 LY away and has a life of only 3×10^8 LY. It has 2 very small companion stars which are not associated with it. Beta Lyrae is an eclipsing binary and Epsilon is a double-double visual and optical double easily separated by a small scope. The most famous feature is M57 the Ring Nebula.

VULPECULA (vul-PECK-you-lah) The Fox contains the Dumbbell Nebula (pn) M27 & Col 339..

AQUILA (uh-KWI-luh) The Eagle's brightest star is Altair, the 14th brightest, 16LY away, A7 Vn

SCUTUM (SKU-tum) The Shield is home to the spectacular Wild Duck (open) Cluster M11.

SAGITTARIUS (sadge-ih-TAIR-ee-us) The Archer is in the center of Milky Way and part looks like a teapot. It contains 8 multiple stars, 14 Messier objects & other delights. See next Nite Sky.

