



# STAR STUFF

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Newsletter

## Star Stuff

This newsletter is published eleven times per year by:

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club  
P.O. Box 7527  
Dearborn, MI 48121-7527

## Officers

President: Arica Flores  
Vice President: Sean Pickard  
Secretary: Cheri Grissom  
Treasurer: Jameson Sullivan

## Departments

Webmaster: Liam Finn  
Membership: Doug Bauer  
Newsletter: Tim Campbell  
Equipment: Jeff Gorman  
Speakers: Sandra Macika

## Club Information

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, except for the combined November/December meeting which meets on the first Thursday of December – at Henry Ford College Administration Services and Conference Center in Dearborn.

## President's Corner

*by Arica Flores, President*

### Annual Club Picnic

The club picnic this year will be held on August 2nd from 5pm to 9pm. It will be held at Island Lake state park Spring Mill Pond Pavillion. The club will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, corn on the cob, water, pop, plates and napkins. Bring your family and a dish to pass. Please let Doug Bauer know how if you are planning to attend and the number of people in your party, so we can prepare enough food for all.

### Observing at the Picnic

When it gets dark, we will have observing — fingers crossed for clear skies.

Observing the Perseids meteor shower July 17th through August 24th is my favorite time. This is when the Earth passes though the debris left behind by Comet Swift Tuttle. This comet was discovered by Lewis Swift and Horace Tuttle in 1962. This comet travels around the sun in a 133-year cycle and last visited us in 1992.

The peak time to observe the Perseids is august 12-13, however there is a waning gibbous Moon then. Hopefully we can still spot a few on the 2nd. Please consider joining us for good food, good conversation, and hopefully a night of meteor's and more.

## Club Information

Refer to our website for a map and directions:

[www.fordastronomyclub.com](http://www.fordastronomyclub.com)

## Observing

The FAAC primary observing location is Spring Mill Pond located within the Island Lake State Recreation Area near Brighton, Michigan. The Club maintains an after-hours permit. Club members can contact any club officer for procedures to enter or exit the park when the main gate is locked.

The club also has use of a private observing site near Gregory Michigan. See the FAAC Groups.io Group for more information.

Inquiries can be directed to [info@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:info@fordastronomyclub.com)

## Membership

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in amateur astronomy. The FAAC is an affiliate of the Ford Employees Recreation Association (FERA).

### Fees

Annual - New Members: \$30

Annual - Renewals: \$25

(\$30 if not renewed by Jan 31)

### Benefits

Membership includes the Star Stuff newsletter, discounts on magazines, discounts at selected

# Secretary's Report

*by Cheri Grissom, Secretary*

## FAAC General Meeting – June 26, 2025

Meeting called to order at 7:16 p.m. by Vice President, Sean Pickard, after a 15-minute snack/social period. President Arica Flores absent. Secretary Cheri Grissom and Treasurer Jameson Sullivan present. We had a total of 26 in-person attendees. Tonight's meeting did not offer online attendance due to our plans to go to the planetarium. Sean asked for member and guest introductions.

### *Member Observing Reports*

Jameson Sullivan had the opportunity to attend the highly regarded Cherry Springs Star Party in Pennsylvania and gave us a nice report. He was there from Thursday through Tuesday. Milton French has been camping in Brooklyn, Michigan, and got some good views of the skies before sunrise and in the evening, including the crescent moon and Venus. Noah Pickard (future FAAC president?) has been observing the moon. Kristie Whittington has been doing solar observing. Sean Pickard had the opportunity to travel to the Kennedy Space Center to observe and photograph the Axiom 4 launch to the ISS.

### *What's Up in the Night Sky*

Sean started by going over our upcoming calendar of events. These dates can be found on our website and in "Star Stuff." This Saturday, June 28, we have an observing event scheduled at Island Lake. At this point, the weather looks promising! On July 2, the Lunar X and V will be visible at approximately 6:41 p.m. but will appear and evolve before and after that time, so be patient and observe over a couple hours. Sean gave us times for upcoming ISS transits of both the moon and the sun, viewable from Island Lake. On July 19, which is one of our observing nights at the park, there will be a solar transit at 8:28 p.m. We will have to climb the nearby hill to observe it, so make sure to bring your insect repellent!

### *Club Business*

The Secretary's Report is in "Star Stuff" each month. Cheri apologized for misspelling Edwin's last name in last month's report. The correct spelling is Kuo. She also reminded everyone that she can provide new members with the plastic sleeves and lanyards for their name badges, if needed. See

*Continued on Page 7*

area equipment retailers, and after-hours access to the Island Lake observing site and private observing sites.

Astronomy or Sky & Telescope magazine discounts are available by contacting the FAAC club treasurer [treasurer@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:treasurer@fordastronomyclub.com) for the discount form. The form should be sent to the respective publisher with your subscription request and payment. Do not send money directly to FAAC.

The FAAC has a pool of equipment including telescopes, cameras, and other gear used for outreach. Much of the gear can be borrowed for personal use in the interest of furthering your knowledge and experience in astronomy.

Please see the equipment list for further information.

## Club Wear

Club logo-wear (embroidered with club logo) can be ordered directly through [LLBeanBusiness.com](http://LLBeanBusiness.com)

See the [groups.io](http://groups.io) files section for ordering information and instructions on how to request the correct logo.

## Communication

The FAAC uses Groups.io for our email distribution list (both formal and informal discussion.)

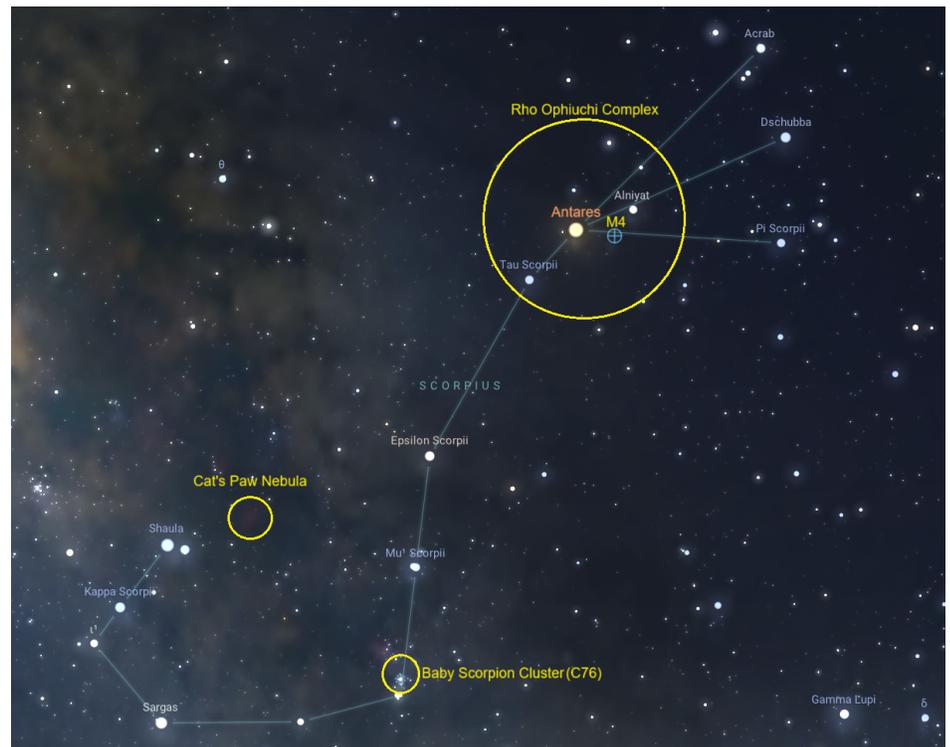
Observing nights & locations (scheduled and unscheduled as weather permits), equipment

# July's Night Sky Notes: Spy the Scorpion

by Kat Troche



As summer deepens in the Northern Hemisphere, a familiar constellation rises with the galactic core of the Milky Way each evening: Scorpius the Scorpion. One of the twelve zodiacal constellations, Scorpius contains many notable objects, making it an observer's delight during the warmer months. Here are some items to spy in July:



The star map of the Scorpius constellation highlights the star Antares and several notable deep-sky objects like the Rho Ophiuchi Complex, Messier 4, the Cat's Paw Nebula, and Caldwell 76, the Baby Scorpion Cluster. Credit: Stellarium Web

- **Antares:** referred to as “the heart of the scorpion,” this supergiant has a distinct reddish hue and is visible to the naked eye. If you have good skies, try to split this binary star with a medium-sized telescope. Antares is a double star with a white main-sequence companion that comes in at a 5.4 magnitude.
- **Messier 4:** one of the easiest globular clusters to find, M4 is the closest of these star clusters to Earth at 5,500 light years. With a magnitude of about 5.6, you can spot this with a small or medium-sized telescope in average skies. Darker skies will reveal the bright core. Use Antares as a guide star for this short trip across the sky.

questions, events, outreaches, etc. are normally discussed via this list.

Join by visiting <https://groups.io/g/FordAstronomyClub> to request membership.

## Articles & Submissions

Your submissions to Star Stuff are welcome! Send your story and/or images to the editor at: [starstuff@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:starstuff@fordastronomyclub.com)

## Observatory

The FAAC maintains and operates the Hector J Robinson Observatory (HJRO) at Lincoln Park Schools.

The observatory houses a 14" Celestron C14 Schmidt Cassegrain Telescope as well as other instruments and can be used by club members.

The observatory is adjacent to the athletic field situated between the Lincoln Park Middle School and High School buildings near

1701 Champaign Rd.  
Lincoln Park, MI 48146

The school system has designated four "key-holders" within the club who have the ability to open the observatory.

Call (313) 444-5850 to learn when the observatory is opening (or request an opening).

- Caldwell 76: If you prefer open star clusters, locate C76, also known as the Baby Scorpion Cluster, right where the 'stinger' of Scorpius starts to curve. At a magnitude of 2.6, it is slightly brighter than M4, albeit smaller, and can be spotted with binoculars and the naked eye under good sky conditions.



*A digital map of the Rho Ophiuchi Complex. Credit: Stellarium Web*

Lastly, if you have an astrophotography set up, capture the Cat's Paw Nebula near the stinger of Scorpius. You can also capture the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex in the nearby constellation Ophiuchus. Brilliant Antares can be found at the center of this wondrous structure.

## *Manaiakalani*

While many cultures tell tales of a 'scorpion' in the sky, several Polynesian cultures see the same stars as the demigod Māui's fishhook, Manaiakalani. It is said that Māui didn't just use his hook for giant fish in the sea, but to pull new islands from the bottom of the ocean. There are many references to the Milky Way representing a fish. As Manaiakalani rises from the southeast, it appears to pull the great celestial fish across a glittering sea of stars.

*Continued on Page 8*

## Planetarium

FAAC members are volunteer operators for the Hammond Planetarium at Henry Ford College.

Planetarium shows are free and open to the public.

Four seasonal planetarium shows are offered per year with the stars and constellations of the current season as well as a multi-media presentation featuring select planets.

Public planetarium shows are normally the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. Please see the planetarium schedule for specific times. It is posted here:

[fordastronomyclub.com/hfc-planetarium](http://fordastronomyclub.com/hfc-planetarium)

## Social Media

The FAAC has several social media accounts. Members are encouraged to join and follow them.

### Facebook

[facebook.com/FordAstronomyClub](https://facebook.com/FordAstronomyClub)

### Twitter

[twitter.com/Ford\\_Astro](https://twitter.com/Ford_Astro)

### Discord

<https://discord.gg/RH6rhAPWb8>

## Scheduled Club Events

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
August	2nd	8:50pm	Spring Mill Pond
August	30th	8:09pm	Spring Mill Pond
September	26th & 27th	4pm - Midnight	Astronomy at the Beach (Kent Lake Beach at Island Lake)

## Hammond Planetarium

Planetarium is on summer-break. Shows resume in the fall.

Date	Time	Topic
September 12th	7:30pm	Fall Planetarium Show
September 17th	7:30pm	Fall Planetarium Show

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
July 24th	Club Members	Open Forum
August 28th	Neil Mottinger, NASA/JPL	Orbital mechanics of launches and interplanetary travel.
September 25th	Dean Regas	Cincinnati Observatory (topic TBA)

## July Meeting

### Open Forum

*FAAC Members*

#### Description:

July is a planned *open forum* meeting. There is no featured speaker this month. Typically there will be a *short* talk followed by club discussion, open questions & answers, and social.

Our next featured speaker for August is Neil Mottenger of NASA/JPL. Neil plans the launches and navigation (orbital mechanics) for interplanetary unmanned missions. This includes everything from the days of the Mariner, Pioneer, Voyager I & II ... to present day such as Perseverance, Juno, and more.

# Equipment

The FAAC maintain an equipment pool of telescopes, binoculars, cameras, and other equipment used for special events. Much of this equipment is available to members.

Each piece of equipment is either stored by a club volunteer who offers to be the caretaker of the item, or by the person who last borrowed the item.

Most equipment can be borrowed for one-month durations. At the end of the month, the borrower can extend the loan if no other members have requested it.

Some items are reserved for special events use and are not normally available to be borrowed.

If you are interested in borrowing an item, please contact either the current holder of the equipment, or contact the club equipment manager, Jeff Gorman, at [equipment@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:equipment@fordastronomyclub.com)

Item	Held by	Item	Held by
<b>Telescopes</b>		<b>Display Items</b>	
TK1 Coronado Personal Solar Telescope (Doublestack) w/Meade Autostar Goto Mount	Jessica Edwards	Astronomy Event Sign (3' x 6')	Gordon Hansen
TK5 4.5" Reflector on Fitz GEM mount	Jerry Jamula	Astronomy Event Signs 18x24" (x8)	Liam Finn
TK6 8" Orion XT8i Dobsonian	Dan Smith	PVC Display Board - Folding	Sandra Macika
TK7 TPO 8" f/4 Newtownian Astrograph (OTA Only - no mount)	Gary Gibson	Banner - Small (24" x 32")	George Korody
TK8 20" f/5 Obsession Dob, Ladder & EP Kit	Liam Finn	Banner - Medium (24" x 72")	Sandra Macika
TKn Celestron 6" Refractor & AGT Mount		Banner - Large (32" x 16')	George Korody
TKn Meade 8" f/5 Newtonian & LX-70 Mount		Tri-Fold Presentation Boards	George Korody
Zhumell 20x80 Binoculars		<b>Other</b>	
<b>Presentation Tools</b>		Canopy (10' x 10')	Liam Finn
Projector (older)	Jim Frisbie	Pop Cooler	Sean Pickard
Projector (newer)	Gordon Hansen	TA Sky Quality Meter	Liam Finn
Projection Screen 8'	John McGill	36" Flat-Top Griddle	Gordon Hansen
Bullhorn	Liam Finn	<b>Demonstration Tools</b>	
Speaker System w/Wireless Mic	Liam Finn	Weigh on Planets Scale	Liam Finn
Logo Tablecloth (x2)	Gordon Hansen	Lunar Phase Kit	Bob MacFarland
		100' Scale Model Solar System Kit	Bob MacFarland
		NSN Meteorite (Outreach) kit	Sandra Macika

Item	Held by
<b>Imaging Cameras</b>	
C2 Meade Deep Sky Imager Pro III w/Autostar Suite	Gordon Hansen
C6 Canon 60Da Astrophotography DSLR and accessories	Tim Dey
<b>Other Imaging Equipment</b>	
CA1 Rigel Systems Spectrscope	Gordon Hansen
C7 Canon EOS EF 70-200mm f/1.4L IS USM lens & tripod mounting ring (for Canon EOS cameras)	Gordon Hansen
Rokinon 8mm f/3.5 Fish-Eye Lens (Canon EOS Mount)	John McGill
<b>Special Event Items - Not available for Loan Out</b>	
BK2 Zhumell 25x100 Binoculars, hard case, & Zhumell TRH-16 tripod w/soft fabric bag	Sandra Macika
TAK1 Night Vision Image Intensifier for telescopes (2" barrel size)	Tim Dey
Lunt 100mm H-alpha Solar Telescope with Celestron CG-5 equatorial mount	Tim Campbell

### *Secretary's Report (Con't from Page 2)*

her at a meeting or observing event. Arica also has these available.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jameson gave our treasurer's report.

**Social Media/Website:** No report.

**Club Equipment:** Jeff is finishing up our annual inventory of club equipment and caretakers.

**Beginners' Night/Club Observing:** The next dates are June 28 (this Saturday), and July 19. We have been having very good turnouts when the weather cooperates. You do not have to be a member to come and look through the many telescopes that will be there. The event is open to the public. If you are someone who has a new telescope and you need help figuring it out, please feel free to bring it (before dark, please), and we will be able to help you.

A reminder that our annual **Club Picnic** will be August 2, starting at 5 p.m., food served at 6 p.m. Feel

free to get there early! We are hoping to get under the pavilion, but we will need people there to save it, since they don't take reservations. Please bring a dish to pass, and chairs for your party, just in case needed. This date also coincides with a planned observing night later in the evening.

**Astronomy at the Beach:** The dates are September 26 and 27. This year we will be back at our usual location, Island Lake Recreation Area, Kent Lake Beach. Gordon Hansen has generously offered to chair the AATB committee again this year. Volunteers are greatly needed and appreciated! Please see Gordon or any board member to inquire about being part of the committee.

Tim Dey wanted to let everyone know about an exciting viewing opportunity. We all know about how we can see Jupiter's moons crossing the planet and giving us what we call shadow transits. Well, over the next couple of months, there will be the opportunity to see shadow transits of Titan over Saturn. More specific info to follow, hopefully.

*Guest Speaker*

Another snack break for about 15 minutes, and then we proceeded over to the Hammond Planetarium, in the building just across the parking lot, where Tim Campbell and Liam Finn gave a very enjoyable planetarium show, demonstrating the improvements and new features recently completed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

**July 3, 2025 Board Meeting Summary**

(Videoconference meeting.) All board members present. Five other members present. Our upcoming general meeting on July 24 will be an Open Forum, no guest speaker scheduled. Sean will do a short presentation with photos and/or video of the recent Axiom 4 launch at the Kennedy Space Center that he attended as a member of the press corps. The remainder of the meeting will be a socialization opportunity with snacks, and members are free to ask questions, etc. There will be no online option for this meeting. Sean will do "What's Up."

**Secretary:** Cheri reported we had a good in-person turnout of 26 members for our last general meeting, where we went to the planetarium and enjoyed recent upgrades to the software. Thanks to Tim Campbell and Liam Finn for presenting the show.

**Treasurer:** Jameson gave our current balance, and advised that we have had no income for the past month, and our expenses were for meeting snacks only.

**Membership:** Doug advises we have had no new members recently.

**Social Media/Website:** Liam absent. Sean has been keeping our social media up to date recently

**Club Equipment:** Jeff absent, no report.

**Annual Club Picnic:** August 2, at Spring Mill Pond. Start at 5 p.m., eat at 6 p.m. Members welcome to

come early. We will try to get the pavilion, which is not able to be reserved, so having at least a few of us there to save seating would be helpful. We have a Beginners' Night on the same date, so plan to stay late if you can! The club will provide hot dogs and hamburgers, corn on the cob, plates, utensils, etc. We ask members to please bring a dish to pass and enough folding chairs for your party in case we are unable to get the pavilion.

New Membership Form: Still a work in progress but we should be able to finalize this next month.

**Guest Speakers:** We have positions filled for the rest of the year.

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*Scorpion (Cont'd from Page 4)*

*Measure Your Darkness*

While you can use smartphone apps or dedicated devices like a Sky Quality Meter, Scorpius is a great constellation to measure your sky darkness with! On a clear night, can you trail the curve of the tail? Can you see the scorpion's heart? Use our free printable [Dark Sky Wheel](#), featuring the stars of Scorpius on one side and Orion on the other for measurements during cooler months. You can find this resource and more in the [Big Astronomy Toolkit](#).

## University of Michigan Public Nights at the Observatory

### 2025 Schedule

Public nights at the U of M Observatory will be held, weather permitting, on these nights.

- Observing sessions require suitable sky conditions. To learn the status of any event, check the Observatory's home page and/or CASL social media pages beginning one hour before the event. Please arrive no later than one half hour before the scheduled end of the session.
- All sessions are free and open to the public. These events are family friendly, but best suited to children over the age of 4. Observing sessions are primarily held outdoors. Please dress appropriately for personal comfort during your visit.
- The Observatory is located on the main campus of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, in the Science Learning and Research Center (SLRC). Park in the parking lot behind the SLRC (Parking Lot A) and enter the building through the west door. Take the elevator to the third floor, and turn left to go through the double doors to the observing deck.

For more information visit our website at:

<https://umdearborn.edu/casl/centers-institute/um-dearborn-observatory>

**Club volunteers are welcome and appreciated** at these events. If you would like to volunteer, you *do not* need to bring a telescope. The observatory has several 8" Celestron SCT telescopes on piers located on the observation deck — but they appreciate have enough volunteers on hand to staff each telescope.

Contact Liam Finn or Tim Campbell if you are interested.

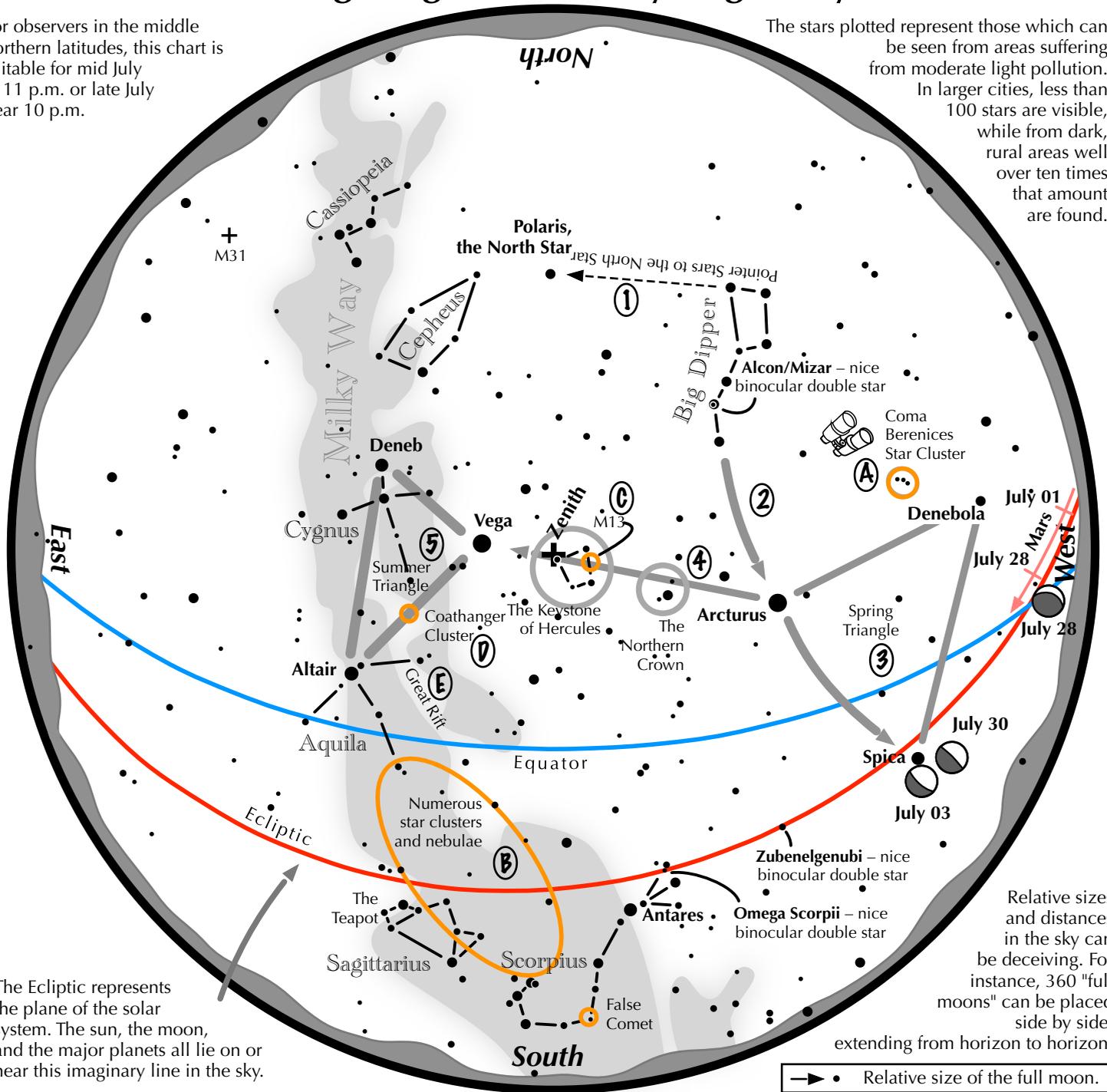


April 25	9:30pm – 11:30pm
May 2	9:30pm – 11:30pm
May 16	10:00pm - Midnight
May 30	10:30pm – 12:30am
June 6	10:30pm – 12:30am
June 20	10:30pm – 12:30am
June 27	10:30pm – 12:30am
July 18	10:30pm – 12:30am
July 25	10:30pm – 12:30am
August 1	10:30pm – 12:30am
August 15	10:00pm - Midnight
August 22	10:00pm - Midnight
September 12	10:00pm - Midnight
September 19	9:30pm – 11:30pm
October 10	9:30pm – 11:30pm
October 17	9:30pm – 11:30pm
October 31	8:00pm – 11:00pm

# Navigating the mid July Night Sky

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid July at 11 p.m. or late July 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.



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 mid July 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 first intersects Arcturus, the brightest star in the July evening sky, then continues to Spica. Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.
- 3 To the northeast of Arcturus shines another star of similar 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 lies the Summer Triangle stars of Vega, Altair, and Deneb.

### Binocular Highlights

- A: Between Denebola and the tip of the Big Dipper's handle, lie the stars of the Coma Berenices Star Cluster.
- B: Between the bright stars Antares and Altair, hides an area containing many star clusters and nebulae.
- C: On the western side of the Keystone glows the Great Hercules Cluster, containing nearly 1 million stars.
- D: 40% of the way between Altair and Vega, twinkles the "Coathanger," a group of stars outlining a coathanger.
- E: Sweep along the Milky Way for an astounding number of faint glows and dark bays, including the Great Rift.

