



# 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*

### What's Coming Up This Year

**January:** Election of club officers & call for Sirius Award nominations.

**March/April:** Annual Astronomy Conference & Swap Meet (date TBD)

**May:** Annual Club Banquet. **Save the date: May 2 at 5:00 p.m.**

### GLAAC Call for Help

Election of GLAAC officers normally occurs in January of each year. This year it had to be tabled until the February meeting due to no candidates for President and Vice President board positions.

To be able to continue to put on an event as successful as astronomy at the beach we need to have a board. We have excellent processes in place to streamline the planning process. The previous President and Vice President will still be a part of the planning team and will mentor their replacements. We have a once-a-month meeting online 1-1.5 hours typically, and you would need to support the event on both Friday and Saturday.

If you would like to help but are not up for a board position or even if you would just like to see what goes on behind the scenes, please join us at our next meeting. The next meeting will be online at 7pm on February 10th. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to myself, Tim or Liam.

## 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 / Holiday Potluck – December 4, 2025

Meeting called to order at 7:06 p.m. by President Arica Flores. Vice President Sean Pickard, Secretary Cheri Grissom, and Treasurer Jameson Sullivan present. We had a total of 23 in-person attendees. Since this was a holiday party with food, there was no online option offered. Arica asked for member and guest introductions.

**Member Observing:** Arica attended the Spiritus Sanctus Academy event in Plymouth. They had a good turnout. Gordon Hansen says his neighborhood had a few good nights recently and he was able to do some things. Milton French went to Island Lake recently with Jeremy Parkinson and another guest. Sean Pickard was able to see Comet Lemmon with the naked eye.

**What's Up in the Night Sky:** We did not have the screen available, but Sean gave a brief report. Starting with our Events Calendar, there are a couple of things that need to be fixed, primarily the date of the January Board Meeting. We had an impromptu board vote to change the date of the January Board Meeting. Moved by Arica, seconded by Sean, unanimous yes vote. It will be January 8, not January 1. The Plymouth Astrophotography group meeting will be on January 6. On December 26, the Lunar X and Y (or V) will be visible; also, on January 25. There will be three ISS transits visible from Island Lake in January, one of which will be a solar transit, on January 20, at 3:56 p.m. Jupiter is at opposition on January 10.

**Club Business:** Secretary's Report is in "Star Stuff." Jameson gave the treasurer's report. Social Media: Arica will make sure the dates are corrected. Club Equipment: No report.

**Elections:** Gordon thanked Dennis, Tim C., and Liam for being part of the committee this year. Our current slate of nominees for our four officer positions are: Dan Smith, President; Sean Pickard, Vice President; Cheri Grissom, Secretary; Arica Flores, Treasurer. Each of these positions is still open to other nominees. If you yourself would like to run for one of the four positions, or if there is someone you would like to nominate, you may do so up to and including the night of

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

our January election. If you nominate someone else, that person must accept the nomination. If there ends up being only the four people mentioned above, no ballots will be distributed, and those four people will be declared to be the 2026 Club Officers.

**Banquet:** Our Banquet will be on May 2, at the South Lyon Hotel. More information will be coming along soon.

**GLAAC:** Arica discussed the need for a new president and vice president of GLAAC. Tim Campbell and Liam Finn are stepping down, but they are more than happy to mentor anyone willing to take over these positions. If you think you may be interested, please feel free to contact either of them or anyone on our board for more information. GLAAC puts on Astronomy at the Beach every year, and it is crucial that they have new volunteers willing to step forward and help out in order for this event to continue.

**Beginners' Nights at Island Lake:** Tim is working on pinning down all of the 2026 dates so they may be published in "Star Stuff."

**Guest Speakers:** Sandra Macika has been lining up our monthly guest speakers for many years now, and we are very grateful to her. She is in the process of lining up speakers for 2026, and we hope to have some commitments soon. If any one of our members has an idea, or would like to speak on a particular topic themselves, please contact Sandra or anyone on the board as soon as possible.

Arica gave a brief talk to remind everyone of the ways the club members can communicate with one another. Groups.io is our official communication platform, and every new member is given instructions on how to join. Any member may start a Groups.io topic or participate in an existing one. We also have Facebook (monitored by Arica) and Instagram (monitored by Isha) accounts, but these are primarily for the purpose of reaching the general public. Please do not use these for communication with other club members. We also use Discord for communication between members, not necessarily the whole club. You can contact Sean Pickard for instructions on joining that platform.

Tim Campbell gave a brief talk to refresh everyone on the procedure for getting into Island Lake. At this time, the park is not locking the gates at night due to staff shortages, but we can't guarantee how long this will be the case. Club members can use the park (Spring Mill Pond) even when the park is closed. Just in case, Tim gave a detailed explanation on

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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).

## Scheduled Club Events

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
April	25th	8:26pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
May	23rd	8:55pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
June	20th	9:13pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
July	18th	9:05pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)

## Hammond Planetarium

Date	Time	Topic
February 13th	7:30pm	Winter Planetarium Show
February 18th	7:30pm	Winter Planetarium Show
March 20th	7:30pm	Spring Planetarium Show
March 25th	7:30pm	Spring Planetarium Show

## Club Meeting Topics & Speakers

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
January 22nd	Robert Reeves	These are a few of my Favorite Things
February 26th	TBD	
March 26th		Open Forum
April 23rd	Bill Keel	Light Echos and Feeding Habits of Supermassive Black Holes

### January Meeting

#### These are a Few of My Favorite Things

*Robert Reeves*

#### Description:

Over decades of lunar observation, I have found places across the face of the Moon where my gaze lingers to enjoy the uniqueness of the geology and landforms. In my talk I will highlight these eyepiece travel destinations so others will appreciate them.

#### Bio:

Robert Reeves has been exploring the cosmos since 1958 and took his first lunar photograph in 1959. He began telescopic astronomy with a four-

## 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>

inch Criterion Dynascope, his Christmas present in 1960. Robert began photographically exploring the Moon while in high school and his Moon photography entry in the 1965 Alamo Regional Science Fair won him a trip to the Johnson Space Center during the groundbreaking 8-day flight of Gemini 5 in the summer of 1965.

In 1984 Reeves began publishing articles about astrophotography in Astronomy magazine. Since then, Robert has published over 250 magazine articles and 300 newspaper columns about astronomy. His articles have appeared in Sky and Telescope, Astronomy, Deep Sky, Deep Sky Journal, Amateur Astronomy, and The Astrograph. In 1994 Reeves published his first book, The Superpower Space Race, followed by The Conquest of Space, co-authored with Fritz Bronner.

In 2000, Robert published Wide-Field Astrophotography, followed by Introduction to Digital Astrophotography in 2005 and Introduction to Webcam Astrophotography in 2006. In the 21st century, Robert pivoted into popularizing the Moon. His book, Exploring the Moon with Robert Reeves, was released in August of 2023. This was followed by Photographic Lunar Atlas, a lavishly illustrated volume released in September of 2024. His next book, A History of Lunar Exploration, is in production at Firefly Books for release in 2026.

Although Robert Reeves is an accomplished deep sky astrophotographer, his current passion is re-popularizing the Moon within the amateur astronomy community by explaining the origin of the Moon, the evolution of its face, and introducing its geology to Moon lovers everywhere. Robert has perfected image processing techniques that allow the amateur astronomer, using modest equipment, to exceed the quality of Earth-based professional lunar photographs taken during the Apollo era.

Reeves has been a keynote speaker at the Winter Star Party, Apollo Rendezvous, the Advanced Imaging Conference, the Okie-Tex Star Party, the Southwest Astrophoto Seminar, AstroImage, ALCON, NEAF, NEAIC and the Texas Star Party. Robert has also been the Master of Ceremonies for both ALCON and the Arizona Science and Astronomy Expo. His recent activities include a five-city speaking tour in China where Reeves was the first westerner to address the Chinese astronomy community about the Moon. Reeves also represents the Celestron telescope company at national astronomical conventions.

Asteroid 26591 Robertreeves is named in his honor and asteroid 26592 Maryrenfro bears his wife's name.

# 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	Kristie Whittington	Astronomy Event Sign (3' x 6')	Gordon Hansen
TK5 4.5" Reflector on Fitz GEM mount	Bob MacFarland	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)	Scott Smith	Banner - Small (24" x 32")	Sandra Macika
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')	Sandra Macika
TKn Meade 8" f/5 Newtonian & LX-70 Mount		Tri-Fold Presentation Boards	Sandra Macika
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 Spectrascope	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 3)*

unlocking and re-locking the gate. The rule is, leave the gate the way you found it. If locked, relock it. If unlocked, leave it unlocked. Tim reminded everyone of the four-digit lock combination.

Hector J. Robinson Observatory, located on school grounds in Lincoln Park: We have had access to this observatory for many years and try to open it up to club members occasionally. We currently have three keyholders who are Tim Campbell, Tim Dey, and Vahan Kazandjian. Edwin Kuo recently moved out of state, so we are looking to find another keyholder to take his place. If you are interested, please contact Tim Campbell or any board member.

We enjoyed an abundance of tasty dishes and desserts brought by our members and spent the rest of our allotted time eating and socializing!

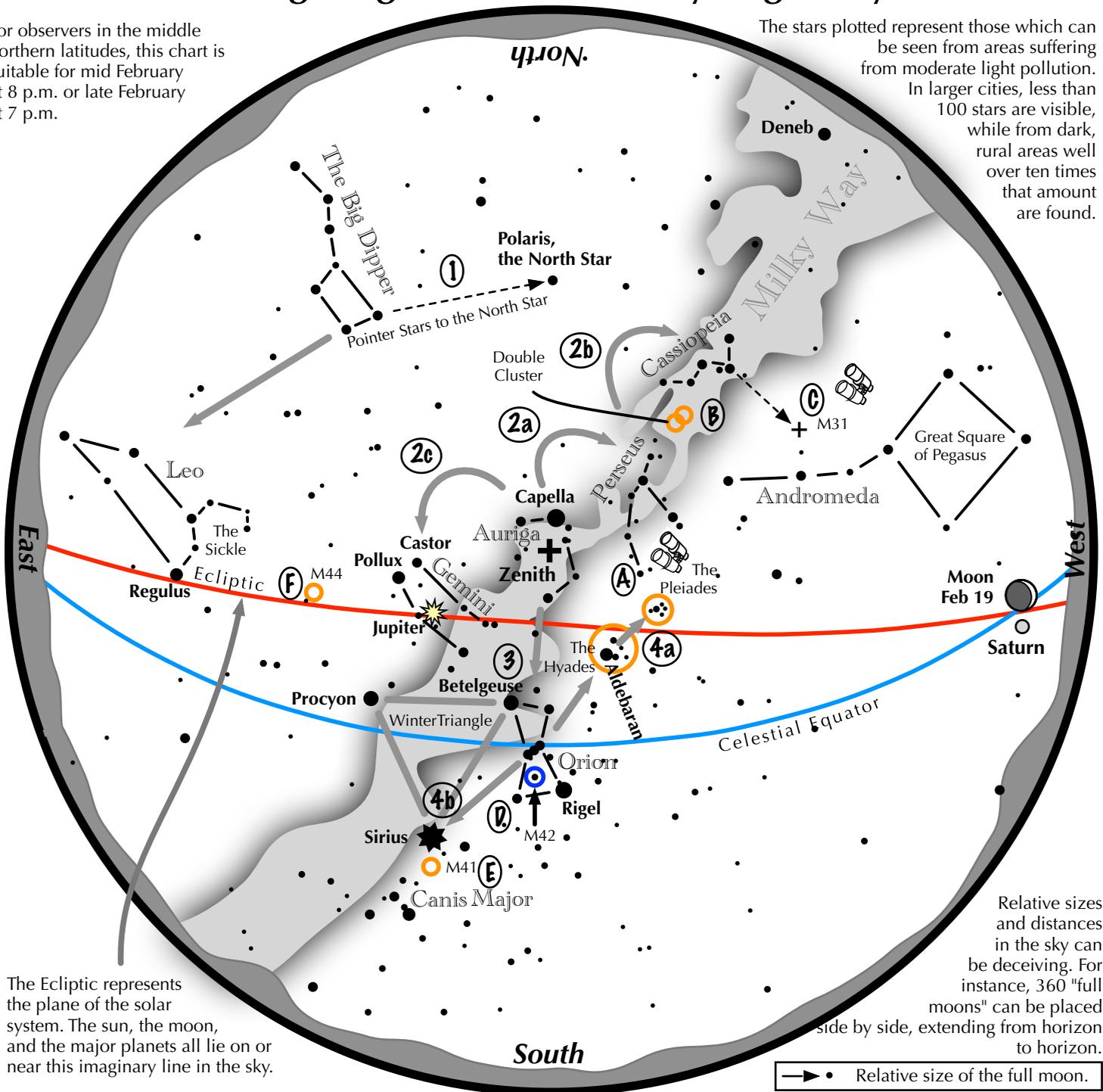
Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

# Navigating the mid February Night Sky

2026

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid February at 8 p.m. or late February at 7 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 February night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Above the northeast horizon rises the Big Dipper. Draw a line from its two end bowl stars upwards to the North Star.
- 2 Face south. Overhead twinkles the bright star Capella in Auriga. Jump northwestward along the Milky Way first to Perseus, then to the "W" of Cassiopeia. Next jump southeastward from Capella to the twin stars of Castor and Pollux in Gemini.
- 3 Directly south of Capella stands the constellation of Orion with its three Belt stars, its bright red star Betelgeuse, and its bright blue-white star Rigel.
- 4 Use Orion's three Belt stars to point northwest to the red star Aldebaran and the Hyades star cluster, then to the Pleiades star cluster. Travel southeast from the Belt stars to the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, a member of the Winter Triangle.

### Binocular Highlights

- A:** Examine the stars of two naked eye star clusters, the Pleiades and the Hyades.
- B:** Between the "W" of Cassiopeia and Perseus lies the Double Cluster.
- C:** The three westernmost stars of Cassiopeia's "W" point south to M31, the Andromeda Galaxy, a "fuzzy" oval.
- D:** M42 in Orion is a star forming nebula. **E:** Look south of Sirius for the star cluster M41.
- F:** M44, a star cluster barely visible to the naked eye, lies southeast of Pollux.

