DAVIS PLANETARIUM

Starmap

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

MARYLAND SCIENCE CENTER
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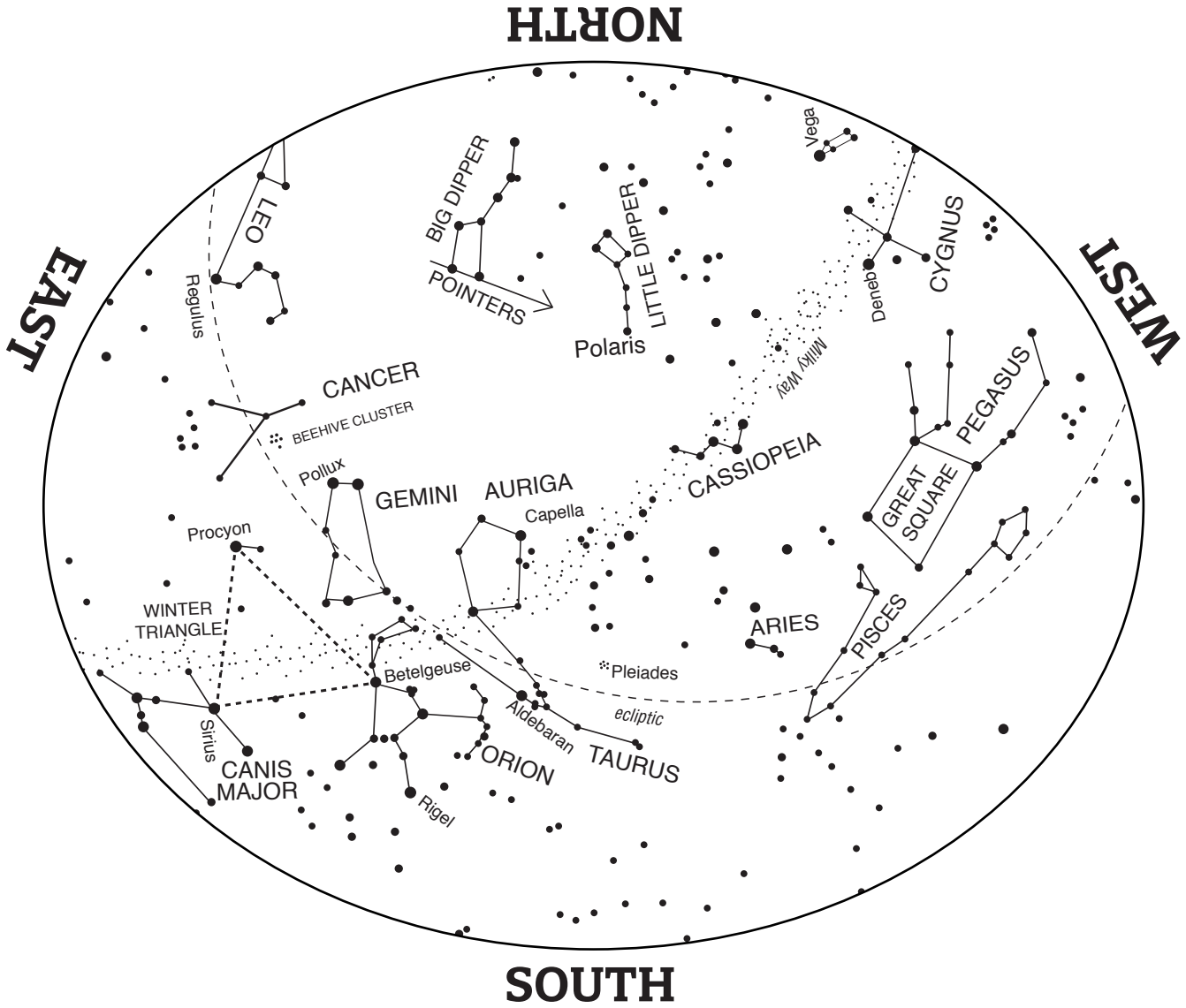

TO USE MAP:
Hold the map in front of you so that the direction you are facing is on the bottom. The stars on the lower half on the map will match up with the stars in the sky. The center of the map is directly overhead in the sky. Constellation and star pattern names are all capitalized. Names of stars have only the first letter capitalized. The map is valid within an hour of:
8:30pm Mid-Jan. EST
6:30pm Mid-Feb. EST

MAGNITUDE is a measure of a star's brightness. The lower the number, the brighter the star

- 1st or brighter magnitude star
- 2nd magnitude star
- 3rd magnitude star
- 4th or fainter magnitude star

ECLIPTIC:
The imaginary path of the Sun through the year. Constellations of the Zodiac surround the Ecliptic and the Moon and planets appear along it.

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IN THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY SKY

Jan 1
Mercury at greatest elongation (morning)

Full Moon

Jan 3
Earth at Perihelion

Quadrantid meteors peak
(See ***Celestial Highlights***)

Jan 5
Moon near Regulus (Morning)

Jan 7
Mars near Jupiter (Morning)

Jan 8
Last quarter Moon

Jan 9
Superior conjunction of Venus

Jan 11
Mars, Jupiter, and Moon in a group (after 3am)

Jan 15
Moon near Mercury and Saturn (Morning)
(See ***Celestial Highlights***)

Jan 17
New Moon

Jan 24
First quarter Moon

Jan 26
Moon near Aldebaran

Jan 31
Full Moon/Blue Moon
(See ***Celestial Highlights***)

Feb 1
Moon near Regulus

Feb 7
Last quarter Moon near Jupiter (Morning)

Feb 9
Moon near Mars (Morning)

Feb 11
Moon near Saturn (Morning)

Mars near Antares (Morning)

Feb 15
New Moon

Feb 16
Venus near crescent Moon

Feb 17
Superior conjunction of Mercury

Feb 23
First quarter Moon near Aldebaran

= Observatory events

CELESTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Quadrantid meteors peak January 3 – A meteor shower is a high frequency of meteors that seem to come from one area of the sky - this one offers up to 120 meteors per hour. Meteors are small bits of space debris that burn up in Earth's atmosphere, creating a quick flash or streak of light in the sky. Meteor showers are usually named for the constellation they appear to radiate from, but in the case of the Quadrantids, their constellation Quadrans Muralis is no longer on modern star maps. Instead, look for Quadrantid meteors near the Big Dipper.

Earth at Perihelion, January 3 – Perihelion is a planet's closest point to the Sun in its annual elliptical orbit. This year, Earth reaches perihelion on January 3, with a distance of 91,401,983 miles making it closer to the Sun than the average distance of 93,000,000 miles. Despite the variable distance between the Earth and the Sun, changing temperatures and seasons are caused by the tilt of the Earth.

Planet groupings – Early morning before sunrise the planets are joining each other in a bit of a dance. On January 7, look for Mars near Jupiter in the southeastern sky as early as 3am. The Moon joins this planetary pair on January 11, then moves on to join Mercury and Saturn on Jan 15. In February the moon visits these planets individually a little higher in the sky starting with Jupiter on February 7, Mars February 9 and Saturn on February 11.

Blue the Moon, January 31 – The phrase, "Once in a blue moon" typically references something that doesn't happen very often. Another definition uses the term 'blue moon' to define a second Full Moon in a calendar month – that happens roughly every 3 years or so. 2018 is unique for Blue Moon's since January and March both have Full Moon's on the 1st and again on the 31st. The way this year's calendar plays out, our January/March double Blue Moons are a result of February being a short month and not having a Full Moon at all.

The bi-monthly STARMAP is available on the web at http://www.mdsci.org/pdf/Planetarium/STARMAP.pdf

CROSBY RAMSEY MEMORIAL OBSERVATORY INFO 410-545-2999

Free public observing nights are held Friday evenings, weather permitting. Observatory hours are 5:30-9:00 p.m. The Observatory is also open Saturdays from 1:00-4:00 p.m., included in Maryland Science Center admission. Please call after 5:00 p.m. on Friday or after 12 noon on Saturday for observing conditions.

MERCURY

When:
Before sunrise, Jan
Not visible, Feb

Where:
Low in southeast

Constellation:
Ophiuchus, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius

VENUS

When:
Not visible, Jan
After sunset, late Feb

Where:
Low in southwest

Constellation:
Aquarius

MARS

When:
Before sunrise

Where:
Southeast

Constellation:
Libra, Scorpius, Ophiuchus

JUPITER

When:
Before sunrise

Where:
South

Constellation:
Libra

SATURN

When:
Before sunrise

Where:
Low in southeast

Constellation:
Sagittarius