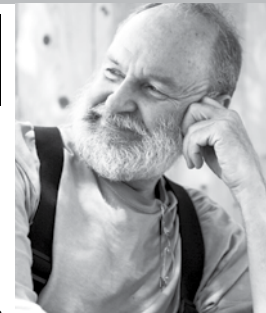


THE STARRY SIDE

Sky above, earth below: We're in this together

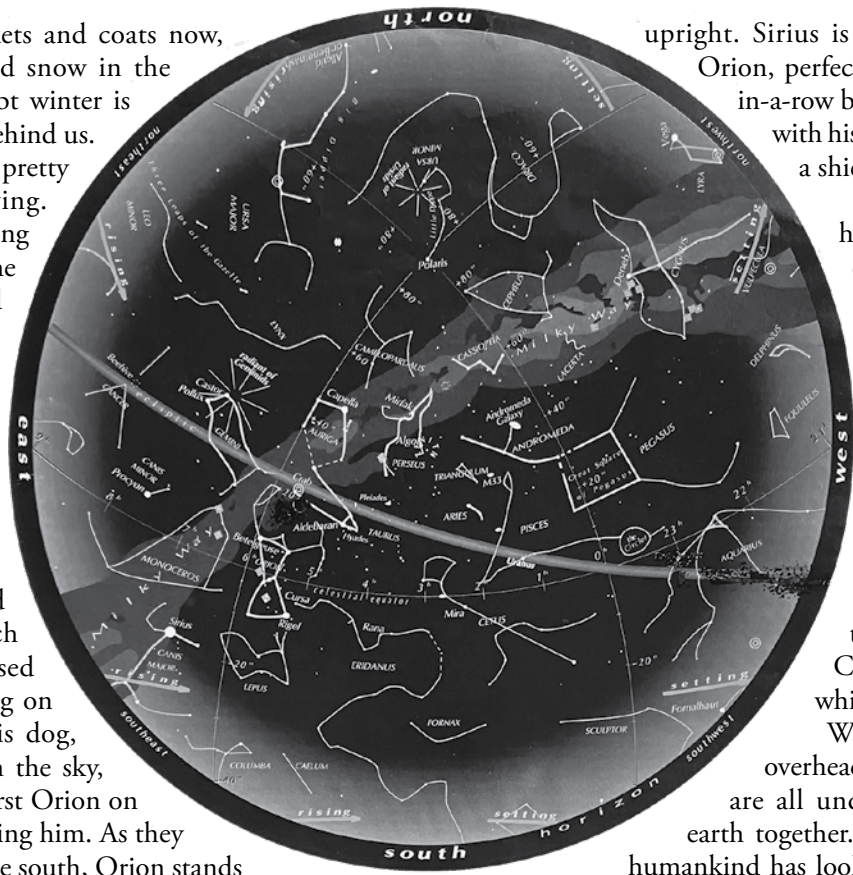
BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

As we put on our jackets and coats now, with rain in our yards and snow in the mountains, there's no doubt winter is on the way. Fire season is behind us. Night skies are clear, but it's pretty cold for sitting and viewing. Nonetheless, when something noteworthy is going on in the sky, I'll dress warmly and take a pillow and blanket to a lean-back chair for sights of the night anyway. Won't you join me?

While we wait for whatever it is, let's scan the constellations. Even though I know almost half of them by sight and have my favorites for each season, I'm always surprised by something. What's going on now is that Orion and his dog, Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, are rising from the east—first Orion on his back, then Sirius following him. As they swing through the sky to the south, Orion stands



upright. Sirius is now to our left behind Orion, perfectly in line with his three-in-a-row belt. Orion holds up a club with his right arm (to our left) and a shield with his left.

Cassiopeia, in the north, has swung counterclockwise over the North Star. She brings the great square of Pegasus with her over the top of the sky and down into the west, getting ready to set during the end of this season. In our Milky Way galaxy—that bright band in the sky—Cygnus, the swan, has turned into the Northern Cross, now standing upright while setting in the northwest. With all of this going on overhead, let's remember that we are all under this sky and on this earth together. Since time immemorial, humankind has looked up and shared stories

of constellations, meteor showers, and other celestial happenings. When Russia's Sputnik went overhead in the 1950s, we looked in amazement at the first man-made object in space we could see from Earth. Old codgers like me remember it as a real shift in human perspective, giving the world a view of our common humanity. Today, of course, there are thousands more man-made objects in the sky. Starlink, for instance, is a "constellation" of satellites that will soon connect us all no matter where we live.

But whether or not we have satellites connecting us via the internet, we still need to remember to work together for the common good. We face a long list of challenges: coronavirus, climate change, rising seas, wildfires, smoke in the summer air, extreme temperatures, too much rain or not enough, human inequity, the destruction of nature. My hope is that these challenges will draw us all closer together to create solutions. How we respond to these challenges—and how we treat each other—should reflect our common humanity.

The world will go on, no doubt, but much convincing scientific data questions whether humans will be able to survive on it. Joining together is the best way to solve these universal problems and avoid further changes that could put our very presence here, under this night sky, at risk.

Greeley Wells • greeley@greeley.me
Night sky image from Guy Ottewill's Astronomical Calendar.

— OF NOTE —

December 13-14: Geminid meteor showers—the king of showers! Up to 120 multicolored meteors per hour at its peak. After midnight is the best time, especially just before dawn.

December 21: Winter solstice. The southern pole of Earth will be tilted toward the sun to the max! Winter solstice is the first day of winter in the northern hemisphere.

January 3-4: Quadrantids meteor shower—up to 40 per hour at the peak.

March 20: Vernal equinox and first day of spring. The sun is dead center above the equator, so day and night are the same length.

The Planets

Mars is in our dawn throughout the season.

Jupiter rises at dusk in December and is visible all night. Jupiter is the brightest "star" up there through March.

Venus will show up in December and January at dawn and then be gone, since she's so near the sun.

Mercury shows up at dusk in December and January; he then slips into dawn in February. He's also really close to the sun, though not quite a bright as Venus.

Kids now eligible for vaccine

COVID-19 vaccinations are now approved for use in Oregon for children ages 5 through 11.

Find out where you can get a free vaccine at getvaccinated.oregon.gov or vaccine.gov.

899-1113
Call or Text
RuchHardware.com
Hardware Grow Supplies Feed Sporting Goods
Ruch Hardware | Check Us Out On Instagram & Facebook!
181 Upper Applegate Rd Ruch, OR 97580
Your Friendly "Savin' MORE Trips to Town" Store!

Grants Pass Water Lab
Accredited in accordance with NELAP
ORELAP # OR1000933 ISO 17025:2005
Eric Schaafsma
Technical Director
eric@gpwaterlab.com
541-476-0733 Fax 541-476-8132 964 SE "M" Street Grants Pass, OR 97526

WEST COAST CONTRACTING
Matt Krauss
541-659-3207
Excavation, Trucking, Water Delivery
CCB #213190
Support your local Applegate businesses!

LOCALLY GROWN PROFESSIONAL
Serving the Valley I Love!
Evelyn Winningham
Principal Broker
evelyn@ramsayrealty.com
541-951-7055
Ramsay Realty
The Applegate Jacksonville Experts
www.ramsayrealty.com

RISE UP!
- ARTISAN BREAD -
"Thanks for loving the bread, Applegate!"

Pegasus Sound Therapy
PEGGY LEVITON, MM, CERTIFIED
Jacksonville, OR
707-382-8641
Individual Sessions • Acoustic Modalities

Natural Products Used
The Cleaning Crew, LLC
Professional Cleaning Services
Homes • Offices • Rentals
Windows, Gutters
Pressure Washing
541-601-6236
Licensed Bonded Insured
TheCleaningCrewOnline.com

rubylane.com
vintage begins here
Silver Lining Jewelers
Historic Jacksonville, Or.
541-899-8201
www.rubylane.com/shop/silverliningjewelers
The world's largest curated marketplace for vintage & antiques.

Ramsay Realty I Know Your Neighborhood
The Applegate Jacksonville Experts
www.ramsayrealty.com
17 Years of Experience!
Jayda Wood Principal Broker
jayda@ramsayrealty.com
541-973-9105