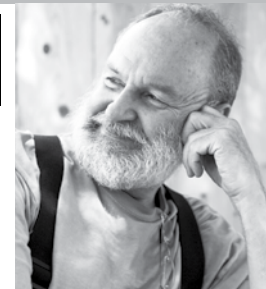


**THE STARRY SIDE**

# Ruchbah explained

BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

You may well ask, “What the \$%^! is Ruchbah?” We’ll get to that in a minute, but first, what’s going on in the summer sky?

Of course, there’s the Summer Triangle that I always talk about. It’s pretty obvious—three bright stars, each part of its own constellation: Deneb in Cygnus (the Swan), Vega in Lyra (the Harp), and Altair in Aquilla (the Eagle).

And I always mention the Milky Way. It looks like a milky sweep more or less though the middle of the galaxy we live in. Until the invention of the telescope, no one knew the Milky Way was made of stars—millions, billions, and we discover even more as the telescopes get better.

Our latest images are of stars that are light years away. (For perspective, a

light year is the distance light travels in a whole year! Our sun’s light gets to us in 12 seconds. A mere 93 million miles!)

That’s where we live! One of billions of stars and planets and other beautiful debris. But there’s huge space between us and all of them.

Every large star we see is in our own Milky Way Galaxy. The bigger and the faster-moving “stars” we see in our little solar system include planets and moons, stars, and flying debris.

The Andromeda Galaxy is the only galaxy visible to us outside our own. The others are incredibly spaced out around our whole universe and too far away to be seen without a telescope.

With each new, more powerful telescope, we find more galaxies—

bigger, farther away, and more numerous than we had imagined. Each time we think we’ve gotten to the end, there’s only more to see through the next telescope! The distances are almost beyond understanding, and certainly all out of plain eyesight. Which is why I personally enjoy just what we can see with our naked eyes in our wonderful night skies.

**Ruchbah**

Now, about the title of this piece. Well, I’ve known about the star named Ruchbah for a while, and I wanted to share it with you because it puts our little town of Ruch on the map of the sky—at least in a way.

It’s spinning close around the North Star in the constellation Cassiopeia. In summer Cassiopeia’s W shape is easy to see below the North Star (if you don’t have a mountain in your way looking north). Ruchbah is the lower-left-hand star in the two V shapes that make up Cassiopeia’s W.

Fun? I love it!

Greeley Wells

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**Ed. Note:** For more information about Ruchbah the star, visit [star-facts.com/ruchbah](http://star-facts.com/ruchbah).



Sky & Telescope ([skyandtelescope.org](http://skyandtelescope.org)).

**— OF NOTE —**

**Planets**

**Mercury**, the closest planet to the sun, is visible at dusk in April (just after sunset) and at dawn in May and June (just before sunrise).

**Venus**, the second-closest planet to the sun, is much brighter than Mercury. Venus is visible in the evening all season.

**Mars**, which has been very bright recently, is now fading but still red.

Mars is also visible in the evening all season.

**Jupiter** set in April but is up again in the dawn for May and June. It’s a good bright planet.

**Saturn** is dimmer and up in the morning for this season too.

**Meteors**

**Bootids**, June 2-July 2. These are bright meteors with slow speed. The

peak is just six days after the solstice, our shortest night. After midnight, when the moon is low, will be the best time to watch.

**Southern Delta Aquariids**, July 12-August 23. These faint meteors with medium speed are a challenge to see. The peak is July 28 in the evening, and best after midnight. Look in the area southeast of bright Jupiter when the moon is less than half full.

**Perseids**, July 17-August 24. These are some of the best of meteor showers each year—fast with medium brightness. The peak is August 13 after midnight, but I’ve seen them continue for many nights, at all times of night, even with some moon. This year, there’ll be almost no moon at all till dawn.

Enjoy it all, if you’ve a mind to!  
Greeley Wells

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