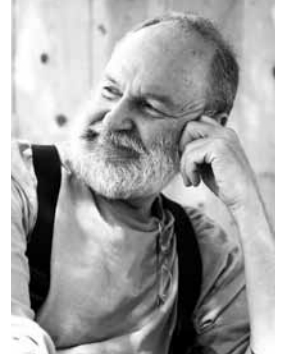


THE STARRY SIDE

Once in a blue moon

BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

Anyone eager for summer? Well... at least a summer with no fires and some water? Anyone confused about the weather? I sure am.

Whether you're eager for summer or confused about the weather (or both), summer is upon us. In the summer sky, the planets' different sizes, speeds, and especially distances from the sun really affect what we see. Think about it: the earth goes around the sun in 365 days. But Mercury is the speed demon going around the sun—and very close to it—4.15 times in one of our earth years! That's why, in our sunrises and sunsets, Mercury is seen low and moving fast. Venus is the second speediest, taking about 224 of earth's days to get around the sun. Venus also appears in our sunrises and sunsets and is by far the brightest planet. Venus is closely followed by Jupiter in brightness, but Jupiter goes just once around the sun in 12 years. That puts him in each constellation of the zodiac for a whole year! Right now he is moving toward Cancer from Leo the Lion. As a point of comparison, Mars goes around the sun in 1.88 earth years. (Mars is presently behind the sun and invisible.) Way out there past Jupiter is Saturn with its beautiful rings, at 30 earth years per solar year! Saturn is currently in Scorpio for about two and a half years. To view each planet easily, remember where it is hanging.

The Summer Triangle has been in our pre-dawn mornings for a while now, getting higher and higher. Each morning's sky reveals the next season's evening sky. The Summer Triangle is prepared to grace our summer, as it always does. Its bright star Vega in the constellation Lyra comes first, toward the northeast. Up next in the east is the star Deneb in the Northern Cross—technically known as Cygnus the

Swan. And finally, a little farther south, we see Altair in the constellation Aquila: the eagle, the three stars in a row. These are some of the first stars out each night in the eastern sky. As they move together across the sky toward the west, they carry half the

Milky Way—all the way from Cassiopeia in the north through the Triangle to Sagittarius in the south, where the center of our galaxy is.

This leads us to the south, which I don't often talk about. The stars and

constellations to the south tend to be dim. I frankly don't know many of them, and I tend to be seduced by the stronger, easier mid and northern skies. Sagittarius is one of the few southern constellations I know well. The English call it the Teapot, and it really is. There's a handle on the left, a triangular spout on the right, and a triangular top. There's even a spoon above. It's really a centaur with a bow and arrow. The center of our galaxy is just upper right of Sagittarius.

Other events of note

At the top of my list is the famously regular and spectacular Perseid meteor shower on the morning of August 13 (and each day on either side of that). There could be 50 to 100 meteors per hour in clear northern dark skies near Perseus, Capella, and Cassiopeia. The lesser Delta Aquarids, radiating from Aquarius, overlap and may increase the numbers.

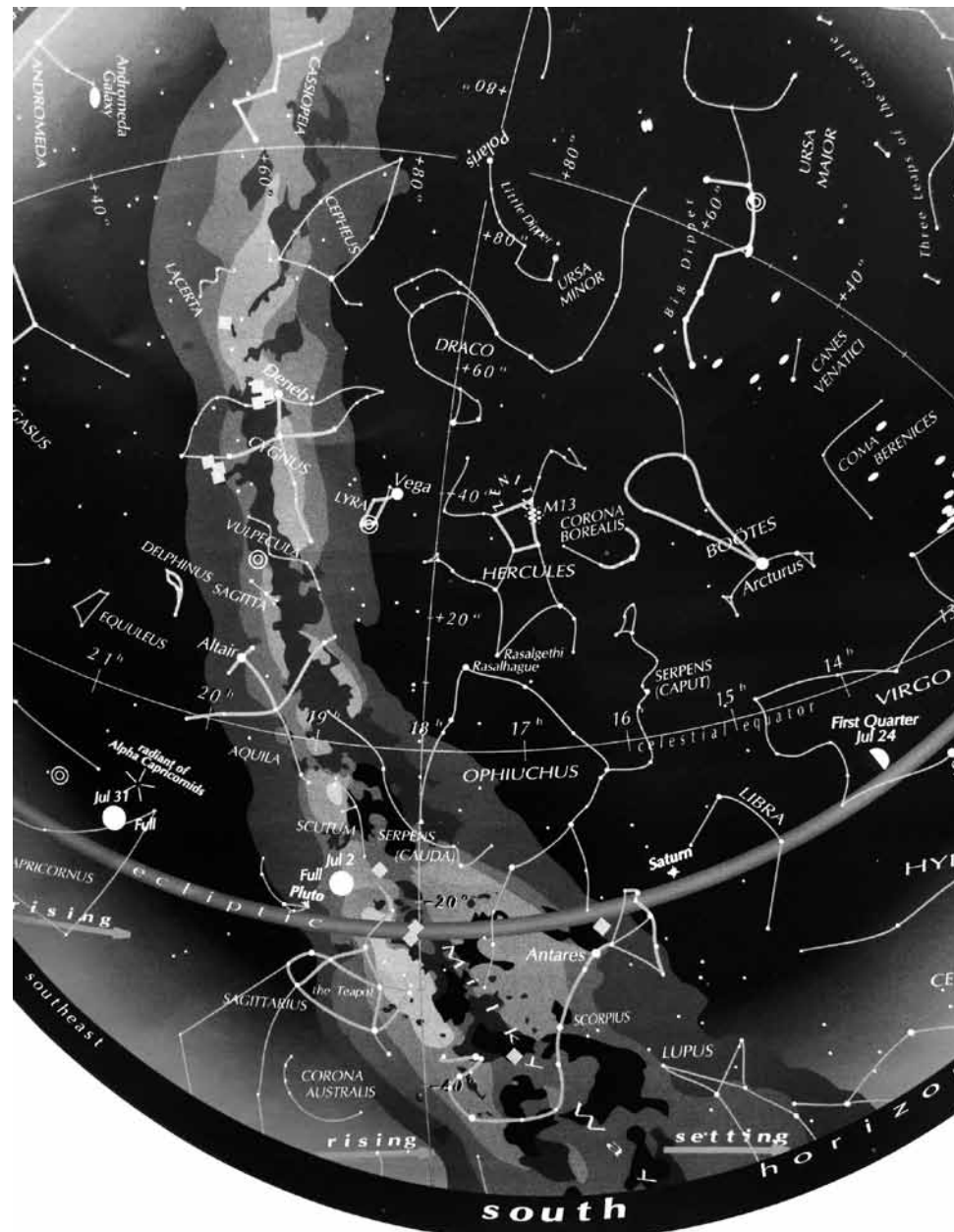
Summer solstice is June 21, with the longest days and shortest nights.

July has a blue moon. Two full moons appear, on July 2 and July 31, the latter being the blue one. It's rare, which is why we sometimes say "once in a blue moon."

A fabulous close conjunction of Venus and Jupiter, late June-early July, shines above the sunset and evening—oh boy! There will be a swell scene on the evening of July 16: close and bright Venus, Jupiter, and Regulus. These three will be joined by the moon on July 18, making a small circle of bright bodies. On July 19, an even smaller circle of the moon, Venus, and Regulus will appear around dusk.

Greeley Wells
greeley@greeley.me

Illustration: Guy Ottewell's Astronomical Calendar 2014.



Jacksonville INN
Gourmet dining in historic Jacksonville
Wine & gift shop • Fine hotel accommodations

175 E. California • P.O. Box 359 • Jacksonville, OR 97530-0359
541-899-1900 • 1-800-321-9344
jvinn@mind.net • www.jacksonvilleinn.com

KT Reich Cleaning
Free estimates and \$25.00 off your second cleaning.

ENJOY LIFE Leave the cleaning to us

Office (541)899-4497 sales@ktreich.com nomorecleaning.com PO Box 292 Jacksonville, OR 97530

Tressi Inanna Albee, MA, LPCi
Psychotherapist

Welcoming new clients
Grants Pass/Medford
(541) 415-0436



Applegate River Ranch Lodge & Restaurant

Restaurant open 5 - 9 pm
Wednesday - Sunday
Lodge open 7 days a week
Wednesday Night Live Music

Lodge 541-846-6690
Restaurant 541-846-6082
Wedding/Special Events 541-660-0244
www.applegateriverlodge.com

APPLEGATE EXCAVATE & FENCE

BLACKBERRY & BRUSH REMOVAL
EROSION CONTROL & CULVERTS
8' DEER FENCING
DUMP DELIVERIES
RETAINING WALLS

541-890-5553

CCB# 201660

Presenting The APWC Seasonal LECTURE SERIES
2nd Annual Summer Outdoor Film
August 2015 @ Red Lily Vineyards
Film & Exact Date & Time To Be Announced

More information on the APWC Lecture Series will be presented on our website at the following address and on our Facebook page. Please contact us if you have any questions.
www.apwc.info/news-events

Jakob Shockey, Riparian Program Manager
riparianprogram@apwc.info
541-890-9989

Janelle Dunlevy, APWC Coordinator
coordinator@apwc.info
541-899-9982

"promoting ecological, economic and community well-being in the Applegate watershed through on-the-ground projects and strategic collaborations."



EL ARRIERO
MEXICAN FAMILY RESTAURANT

Juan De La Cruz Porfirio De La Cruz

2366 WEST MAIN ST. MEDFORD, OR 97501 (541) 245-5872

235 BARNETT ROAD MEDFORD, OR 97504 (541) 245-6778