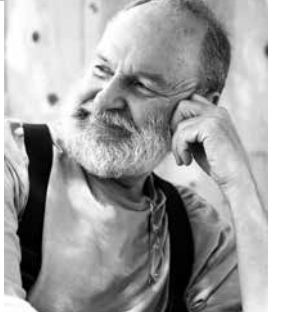


THE STARRY SIDE

An endless season of Corona

BY GREELEY WELLS



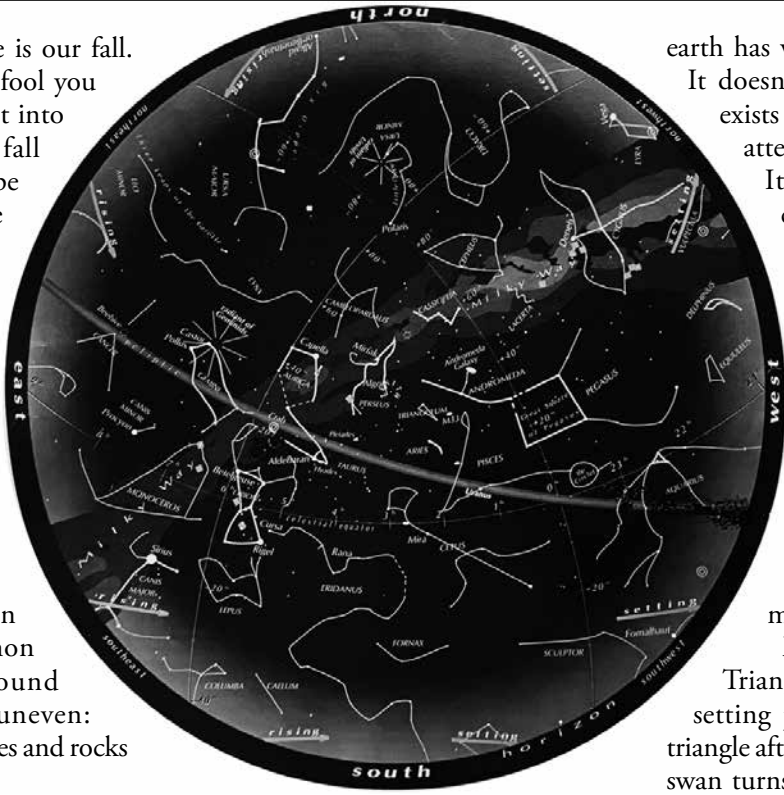
Greeley Wells

From Equinox to Solstice is our fall. Early on, we have days that fool you with their heat, then fade fast into a chill. By Solstice all the fall colors that light the landscape have fallen to earth. It's a wide range of change; we have our backs to hot summer and our feet soon in snow.

Our fire season has ended—a horrible one this year, and way too close to home. Our rainy season should have commenced by the end of this period, but nothing is quite so easily predicted anymore. We seem to be in a new time when surprises outnumber common predictions, when the ground under us is a little more uneven: bumpy . . . mixed with potholes and rocks . . . even dangerous!???

On top of that, look what else has happened this year to have a great influence on us all: that virus, which has taken so many lives and countless jobs and incomes, has kept most of us in our homes, put a mask on almost every face, and changed our economic outlook, schools, work, and gatherings we have counted on forever. It has shown us many other new and sometimes terrifying realities and possibilities.

As if all that's not enough, there was the election, which made all of us tense. Now with a new president coming in, will we be going down the same track as today or another path to what I hope is a better one? We are in another season the



Guy Ottewell's Astronomical Calendar

earth has very rarely experienced before. It doesn't have a name as yet. But it exists for sure. It doesn't pay much attention to the norms we know.

It's not from left or right or center; maybe it's from no field at all. Maybe it's the universe giving us a wakeup call. Or perhaps a message from God or the devil? Whatever your definition, I'll bet you feel it. I think we all sense something really big, really strong, really noticeable has shown up and must be obeyed. I can only assume ultimately for the better. Please may that be so.

Meanwhile the Summer Triangle has headed to its western setting positions. One corner of the triangle after another sets until the graceful swan turns and stands upside down as a

cross, then sets while sliding north along the western horizon line.

The great square of Pegasus has attained the zenith of the sky and moves west, too. Then rising in the east the row of, first, the Pleiades (a sweet clump of stars); and the "V" of Taurus the Bull, with the bright Aldebaran; and then Orion's three-in-a-row belt. Eventually rising in the east like the rest is our brightest star, Sirius, the dog star, finishing the row. Then we'll know it's winter, that season drawn between the winter solstice and spring equinox.

Ah . . . something "normal" and predictable, something we can count on and recognize.

Wrap up and enjoy the night's bright, interesting stars,

Greeley Wells
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Of Note

December 21 is the winter solstice and beginning of winter, the longest-seeming night of the year, with the shortest day. That day also brings a rare conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. They will be so close together they will almost make a bright double planet! Look west just after sunset. The last time this happened was in the year 2000!

The vernal Equinox is on March 20 with equal amounts of day and night throughout the world.

The Planets

Mercury is up in December during dusk. In January he's up at 8:33 am, making it a tough or impossible find. February he's also up in the dawn.

Venus rises at 6:43 am in December and is up at dawn in January but not in February.

Mars has been so bright and up all night for months. In December he's setting in the west at 7:36 pm, so play with him after or during sunset. January and February find Mars an evening star setting with the sunset.

Saturn is in the evening sky near sunset in December. No appearance in January but in the dawn in February.

Jupiter is up in the sunset during December, but not visible in January or February.

Meteors

The Quadrantids will peak on January 4. The moon will set early, leaving a dark early morning sky with some 40 meteors per hour!

The Lyrids will peak on morning of March 22. With no moon they will show some 20 meteors an hour.

■ CRAFTS

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sell my paintings," since, she says wryly, art sales usually just cover the costs of art supplies. Apple Outlaw Hard Cider, on Thompson Creek Road, is doing more packaged products—bottles and cans instead of draft. Serene Dussell is looking for a side job to fill in the gaps—and trying not to deplete her savings.

There is some government help. Barbara and Kevin's alternative sources of income include Social Security as well as a small monthly inheritance. Kevin has taken out a small-business loan to cover emergencies. Williams musicians Conny and Walter Lindley are retired so are not dependent on what they once made by performing monthly, with their trio, Stolen Moments, at Belle Fiore Winery.

While the "starving artist" is not an image to perpetuate, Barbara points out

that eating out less has helped and that gas and travel expenses are "virtually nonexistent."

And so artists, who are by stereotype non-technological, have been turning to the internet. "I am working on an Etsy shop and a web site," Shanna says, "but I'm not there yet!" Zoom exists, but Barbara, like many musicians, doesn't enjoy playing on Zoom. Kevin's online gigs have garnered, altogether, less than \$1,000, but he does play outdoor funerals, "with kilt and highland pipes."

The English Lavender farm is encouraging online sales, offering free shipping in some circumstances and adding products like lavender-print face masks and lavender hand sanitizer. By George Farm uses a new app that allows customers to preorder and pick up later.

The loss of a sense of community is as significant to artists and musicians as

the financial loss. Barbara Mendelsohn and Kevin Carr used to host west coast and international folk musicians. "The hosting didn't bring in income," Barbara said, "but it brought much joy to us, the audiences, and the visitors—and now that's gone, at least for the foreseeable future."

Instead, as long as the weather was good they were having informal outdoor jams with friends, wearing masks and keeping distance. Conny and Walter are focusing on recording their music this winter. There is a general feeling of inwardness. Barbara speaks for all the arts community, in the absence of fairs, markets, and events, when she says, "I—we all—miss the sociability of our warm, casual, supportive musical (and arts!) community!"

Diana Coogle
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Food bank perseveres, still here to help

What a year! We at the Applegate Food Pantry have had so many friends and families that have lost so much, and we are grateful for all the support that we have received in efforts to help. We have had one disaster after another, but we are holding strong.

We appreciate all of our donors and the wonderful folks in the community who have brought fresh produce and have kept our food pantry open. Thank you to all of our volunteers and clients. We have made friends and are truly appreciative and happy to help.

Our hours are 11:30 am to 1 pm on the backside of Ruch Elementary School on Mondays. Come check us out!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Deborah Price, Manager
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Michelle Bollinger, Assistant Manager
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Got News?

The *Applegater* welcomes submissions! We're your newspaper and want to share your news with readers throughout the Applegate Valley watershed's many neighborhoods. What's going on around you? Let us know! Send your writeup and photos to gater@applegater.org. Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*....

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