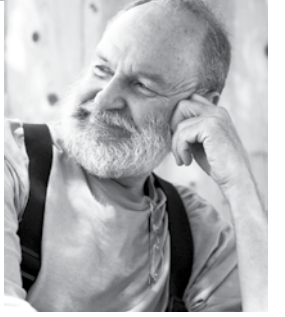


THE STARRY SIDE

Let's keep the night sky dark

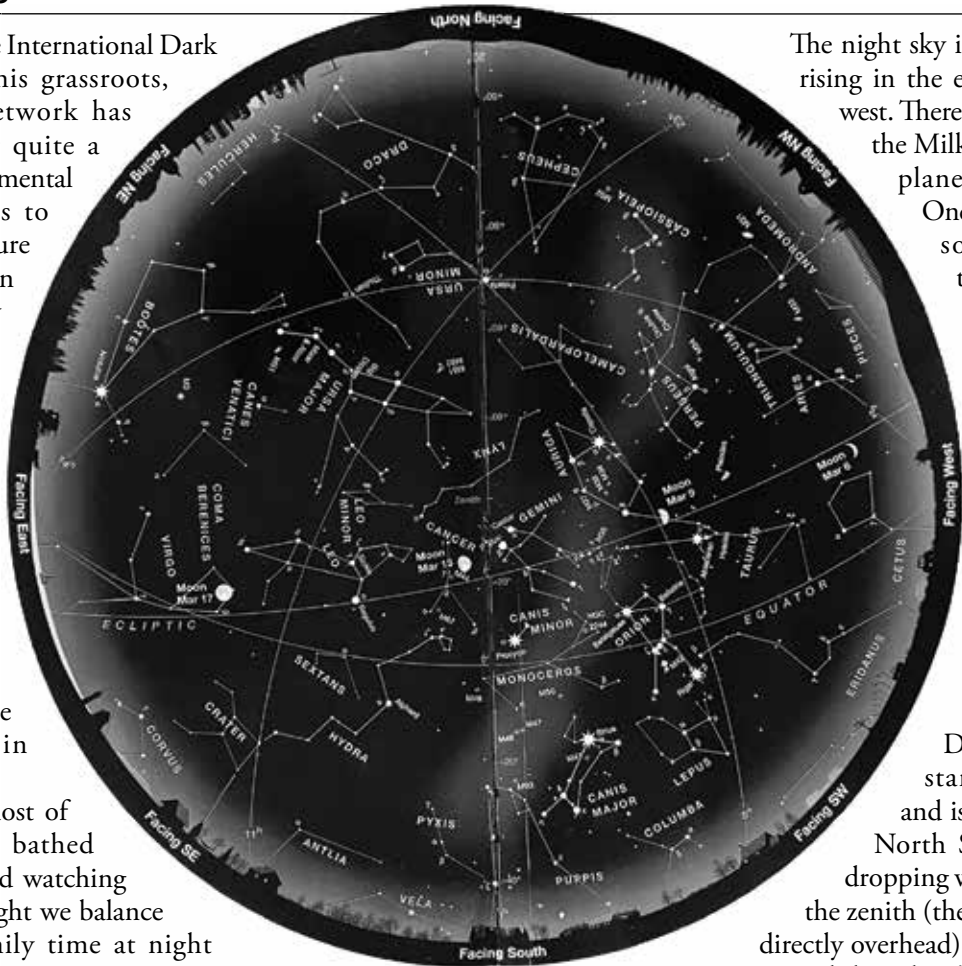
BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

I support IDA, the International Dark Sky Association. This grassroots, global advocacy network has been in my life for quite a while. IDA was instrumental in opening my eyes to the multifaceted nature of our connection to the night sky and how outdoor lighting obscures so much of it. We need to protect our nocturnal environment. IDA advocates for best practices to limit our light pollution, saving energy and enhancing human and creature health and safety in the process.

We who spend most of our evenings inside bathed in electrical lights and watching glowing screens—might we balance that with some family time at night outside? Get comfortable, look up, and talk together about what you see and what you've learned about the night sky. It takes about 20 minutes for our eyes to fully



Sky & Telescope (skyandtelescope.org).

adapt to the dark, and then—there's so much more to see!

The night sky is constantly changing, rising in the east and setting in the west. There are occasional meteors, the Milky Way, the stars, a few planets, perhaps a moon.

Once you begin identifying some constellations, there are endless histories, stories, and configurations to puzzle out. And while it may be easier to be outside at night in the summer months, on cold clear nights the sky is incredibly bright. I encourage you to go out and...look up!

Look for the Big Dipper, which has been standing on its handle and is now moving over the North Star and to the west, dropping with Leo the Lion from the zenith (the point in the sky that's directly overhead) into the west.

And then there's winter's favorite: The constellation Orion and, nearby, his faithful dog, Sirius, the Dog Star, the brightest star in the sky, will all stand upright in the

west before they eventually set.

As you look up at these remarkable sights, remember that limiting light pollution will help us preserve the timeless heritage embodied in the stories depicted by the stars, not to mention the exhilarating sensation of observing our magnificent universe with our naked eyes. To learn more, check out IDA at darksky.org.

Greeley Wells
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— OF NOTE —

- **Jupiter** will not be visible in March but will be in our dawn in April and May, but not quite as bright as Venus.
- **Mars** also inhabits our dawn sky, a little red and not too bright.
- **Mercury** is visible in the dawn all season, dimly and close to the sun of course.
- **Saturn** rises after midnight to be in our dawn sky, but only in April and May.
- **Venus** has now become a very bright morning star, having traveled in front of the sun and after making a long run of sunset appearances last year.

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