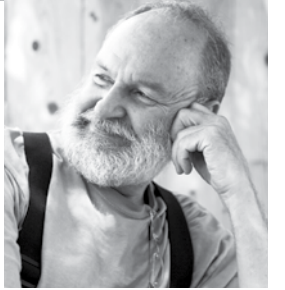


THE STARRY SIDE

The dances around the North Star



Greeley Wells

BY GREELEY WELLS

A belated happy new year to you—and happy springtime.

Last season, that great man, Orion, rose from lying down in the southeast to stand straight up in the southwest. Now he's leaning the other way as he sinks below the horizon. Sirius is trailing along with him, in perfect alignment with Orion's three belt stars. The Milky Way is stretched along the horizon, southwest to northwest. In summer, it will rise along the eastern horizon as it does every year.

In the southeast, Hercules rises, a large square shape with stars off each corner. Above and farther north rises a very bright star, Arcturus, in the constellation Boötes. If you follow the long handle of the Big Dipper about double its length—voilà! Arcturus!

It's all the dances around the North Star. The Big Dipper is now directly above the North Star, and Cassiopeia (my "W" for Wells) is below. The last star of the Little Dipper's handle, which is swinging to the east, is the North Star. Gemini (the Twins, bright Castor and Pollux) is high in the west above the setting Orion, with

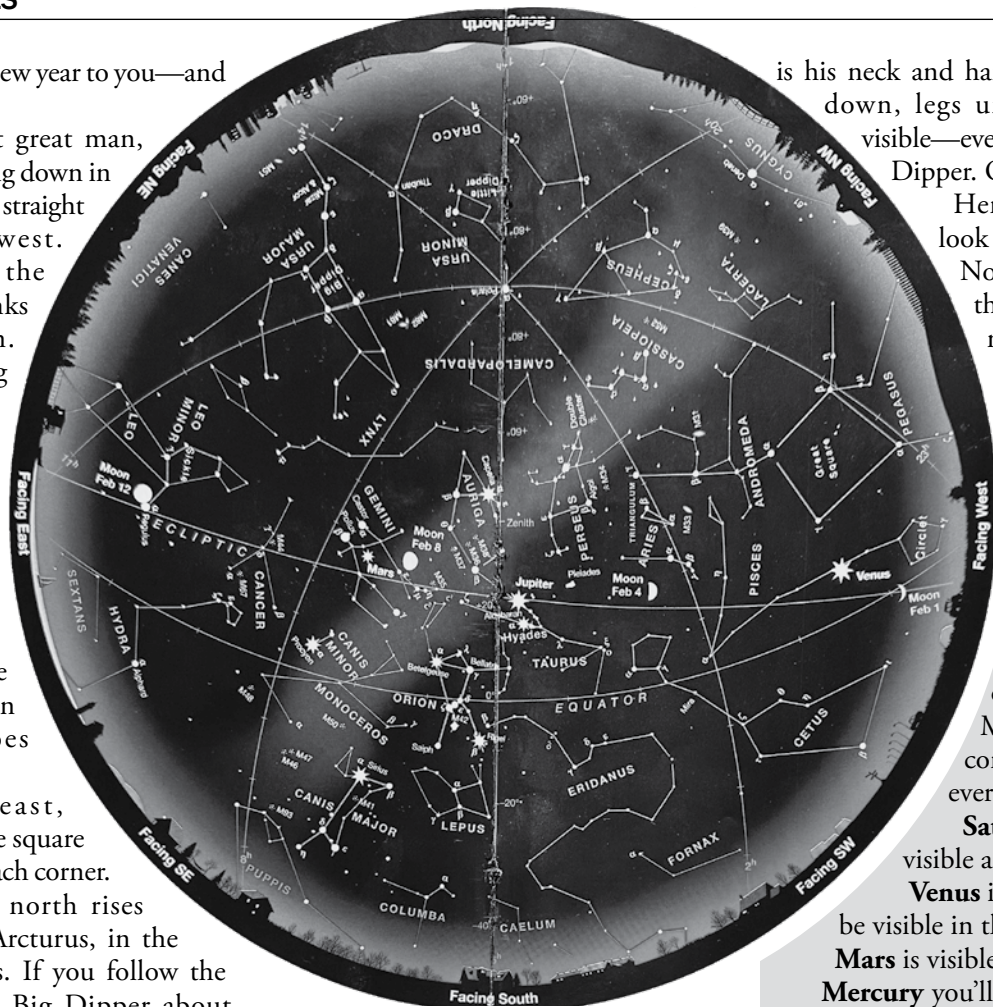


Image: Sky & Telescope (skyandtelescope.org).

bodies, arms, and legs standing upright, and heads about midway between the horizon and the sky overhead. Leo, the Lion, stretches from east to west high in the sky.

Leo is parallel with the Big Dipper overhead. The backwards question mark

is his neck and hair. He's clearly lying down, legs under him and tail visible—even bigger than the Big Dipper. One of my favorites.

Here's another way to look at these dances. The North Star (Polaris) is the only star that does not change position at all! It just rotates. All the rest revolve around it, some close, some farther away, depending

on the season. The North Star is important because it's easy to find and doesn't change position. When you're looking for constellations, it's a good idea to start with the North Star and work from there. The constellations close to the North Star are always visible, so they will help you find your other favorites. The North Star teaches us where north is. For me, the North Star always appears among some trees beyond my deck. That's north!

Greeley Wells
greeley@greeley.me

— OF NOTE —

The Planets

Jupiter—the biggest planet besides Earth—is in the center of the sky at dusk in March, then at dawn in April and May. It's really bright these nights, moving west to set with the constellations around it. After being as close and bright to us as it ever gets, it's now slowly moving away and getting dimmer.

Saturn is visible at dusk in February, not at all in March, and is visible at dawn in April and in the morning in May.

Venus is visible in February and March at dusk; in April and May, it'll be visible in the early morning.

Mars is visible in the evening until May, when we see it at dusk.

Mercury you'll see at dusk in February and March. In April and May, you'll see it near dawn.

Of Special Note

April Lyrid Meteors. It's possible to see these April 15-29 when the sky is dark before the moon comes up—perhaps 10-15 per hour. (Rates of 100 per hour have been recorded!) The radiant (the center they all seem to come from) is close to Vega in **Lyra**, but these meteors can be anywhere in the sky.

May Eta Aquarids. The best morning to watch is May 5 before dawn. Expect 10-20 meteors per hour. Look towards the southern horizon. Their center is in **Aquarius**.

Farewell, ACC—Hello, Apple Outlaw

BY JAMES "BUCK" REINDERS

Another deal is under way in the Applegate. This one will complete the trifecta of business acquisitions that are transforming the town into a more refined version of its former self. First came changes from the Lindsay Lodge (formerly Applegate River Lodge), then the Station (formerly the Applegate Store), and now the Apple Outlaw Official Taproom. The local cider company will be renovating the building that has served as the Applegate Country Club (ACC).

This is bittersweet news for those of us who remember fondly the club's best years, when the pears were a fallin', when we spent the evening in the garden enjoying a pizza after a tantalizingly long wait time. ACC was a revolving door of food, employees, and good stories. Remember when a car drove through the fence? Those were the times. But now, the close is official. The website is already down. It's too late for one last look through the restaurant's selection of stock photos, too late to say good-bye to the strangers holding pizzas. They looked so happy....

Perhaps the most nostalgic among us about the former Country Club will be from the town's rodent population. After all these remodels and renovations, even the clubhouse will no longer be safe for them. The rats are sounding the first cries denouncing gentrification. So, it may be time to ask ourselves, "Are we one step closer to an *actual* country club in town? And is there *still* a collared shirt somewhere in the closet?" Let's see what the new taproom has planned.

There will be a full menu of food and drinks, including, of course, the colorful lineup of Apple Outlaw ciders on tap and, very likely, pizzas from the oven. The building will be overhauled. Pests will be evicted and security measures implemented. The raccoon bandit featured on the cider's label will have to keep his heists limited to the apple orchard up Thompson Creek Road.



Raccoon bandit on Apple Outlaw's cider label.

Yes, there will be big changes—plans for a whole new outdoor area are under way—but the Outlaw brand is far from a ritzy country club or sparkingly bright tasting room. They've got a dark and lawless edge in their favor, which might lead one to think that with a secret handshake or turn of phrase, there could be a speakeasy somewhere in the tap house with a glass of brandy and a cigar waiting.

Their ambition is to stay open year-round and hold as many events, concerts, and community gatherings as possible. But as their predecessor can attest, it's no easy feat to keep a restaurant open and a crew of staff happy.

The restaurant biz is tough, but the owner of Apple Outlaw, Jonathan Amorim, is resourceful. Even while traveling, he was able to quickly respond to the questions that were sent for this article. I believe his abilities were augmented with the latest

AI technology. When I asked if there was a way to contact a certain person, he managed to respond with a single word: "Yes." How economical!

For a personal touch, I asked if he'd share any observations he's made about doing business in a small town, and this part of his response struck me: "2. Multitasking is a way of life. In small towns, it's common to see the same person wearing multiple hats—your supplier might also be your mechanic and your customers might also be your friends (or competition)."

I find this somewhat inaccurate because one of my jobs used to be selling Apple Outlaw cider at the market, and I wore the same newsboy cap then as I do now, while I'm doing this journalism thing. But it's okay; large language models make the occasional mistake. The point is that we can expect a fresh approach to business on the corner of Highway 238 and North Applegate Road.

A quick thanks to Jonathan and his virtual assistant for answering my questions, to the ACC for the good memories, and to all those who value good food and are willing to invest in the public locales in our valley.

James "Buck" Reinders
james.b.reinders@gmail.com

Jeanne Schattler
(541) 621-2480
Principal Broker, PSA, GRI
Windermere Van Vleet Jacksonville
505 N 5th St, Jacksonville, OR 97530
jvillejeanne@gmail.com
www.jeanne4land.com
Specializing in Farms & Ranches / Eco-Friendly Lifestyle

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CT Shoop Incorporated

P.O. BOX 5557
Central Point, OR 97502
(541) 930-2437
ctshoop15@gmail.com

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acupuncture
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Sang Ly Montage
Licensed Acupuncturist

541.708.3953
228 NW B St., Suite A
Grants Pass, OR 97526