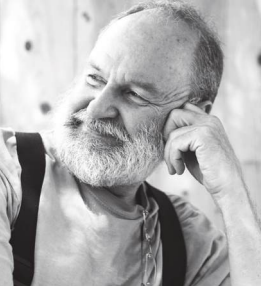


THE STARRY SIDE

My own story

BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

What, no star talk? No descriptions of constellations? Oh my!

That’s right. My column this time is a personal description of my relationship with the night sky.

I’ve told you, in a previous column (fall issue, 2023), the story of the grandmother who took me, at six or seven years old, to a beach and intoxicated me with visions, names, and shapes overhead. Ever since, I’ve been fascinated by the night sky, with its stars, planets, and moon.

For about 30 years I’ve expressed to you, in each *Applegater* issue, this love I have for the night sky. Now, at 81 years old, I want to tell you a little more about my personal relationship with these miraculous things.

During most of known human history, there was little light at night besides the stars and moon, which were important and useful to people. Whole civilizations developed around the night sky: calendars, stories, history, names, education. Now, with electricity and lights everywhere, it’s hard to see the night sky—and with so many well-lit, fun things to play with, who needs or even notices it?

But away from towns and roads, a fascinating and beautiful universe moves slowly above us, never quite the same each night or season, sprinkled with surprises

and unknowns and old friends. The more attention I give it, the more gifts it gives me. Finding in it a universality and a connection to our history as a human race, I envision a family outside their cave home, sitting on rocks, looking up, and telling stories about the night sky. Like them, I’m a part of it. We all are.

Today, long-distance telescopes and satellites connect us with the whole continually expanding universe. The

further we see, the more our knowledge increases. Our connection with the universe is getting so deep and amazing, I can’t help but feel a deeper personal connection to it no matter how complicated and huge it appears. It doesn’t matter how little of the universe I see with my night vision—the pictures from those telescopes and satellites deepen my feeling of connection day after day.

I’ve been blessed to live for over 30 years with no lights but my own. It has been such a pleasure to have this close relationship with the universe: this time, this

inspiration, this bunch of celestial friends who show up for me, with me, and above me, night after night. We all sleep through most of the night sky, but I have a meditation practice that gets me up early. Almost every night I take a short walk to look at the sky. Even winter clouds add an important element of mystery and surprise, often performing sleight-of-hand magic: *Did you see it? What was that?*

I know many of you also love this sky. I’m grateful you have enjoyed it with me all these years.

Here’s the illustration for this season. Let’s play around with it. If you’ve got a red night light, you’ll be able to see the illustration and still see the dark sky. If not, study the illustration and then go outside, let your eyes adjust, and see what you can find!

Thank you for indulging me; back to normal next time.

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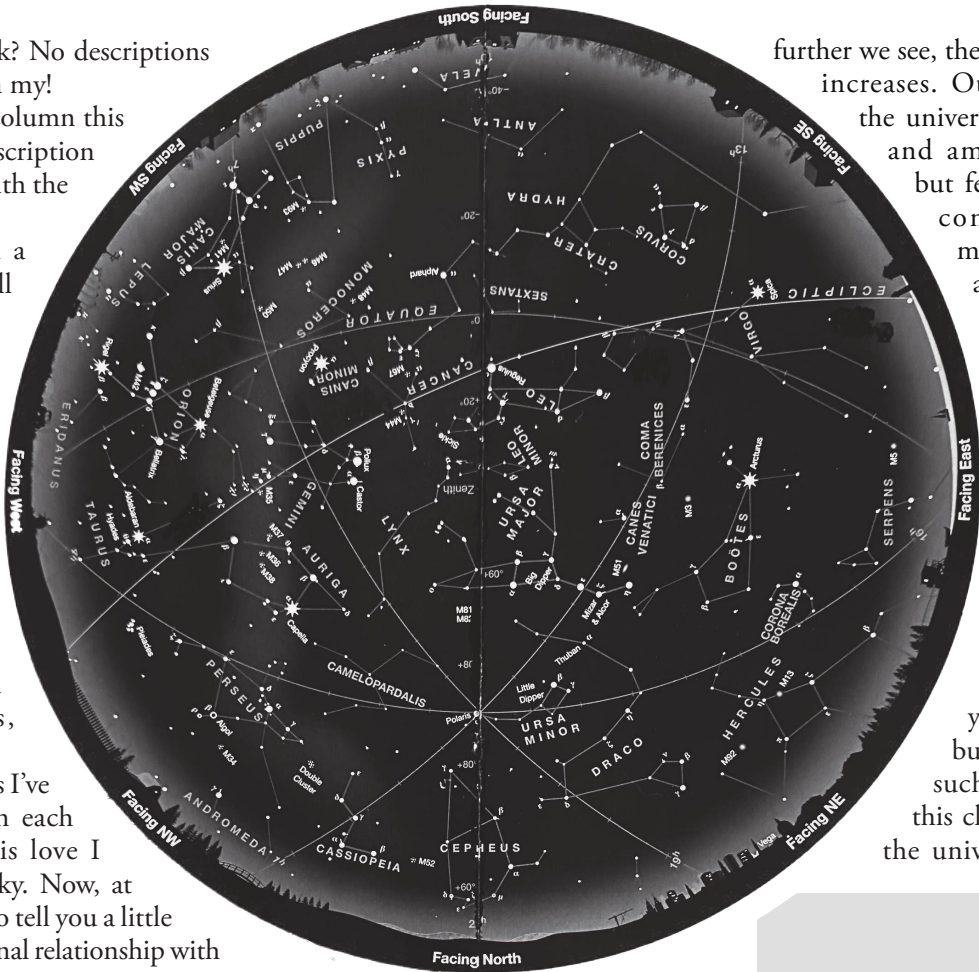


Image: Sky & Telescope (skyandtelescope.org).

— OF NOTE —

Planets

**Mercury** is visible at dawn in May and August and at dusk in June and July.  
**Venus** shows up in the mornings May through August.  
**Mars** is an evening star throughout the season.  
**Jupiter** shows up in May mornings, is missing in June, is back at dawn in July, and then appears in mornings again in August.  
**Saturn** is in our mornings throughout this season.

Meteors

**Delta Aquariids** go from May 29 to June 17. At the peak on June 7, there could be 60 per hour in the east before dawn!  
**The Perseids** can, but rarely do, reach up to 90 per hour in perfect conditions and with good luck. Look in the east early mornings of August 11-13 for the best chance. Hold your hand, or anything else, over the moon if it’s up.

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 write-up and high-resolution photos to [gater@applegater.org](mailto:gater@applegater.org). Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*....



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