

Northern Berkshire Astronomical Society

Founded 2023 | North Adams Public Library | North Adams, MA

This Month

Jupiter, and winter
constellation highlights!

The Moon

-  - Jan 4
-  - Jan 11
-  - Jan 18
-  - Jan 25 "Wolf Moon"

Planets

Mercury, just before Sunrise

Venus: Rises about 5AM

Mars: behind the Sun

Jupiter, Uranus: in Aries

Saturn: in Aquarius

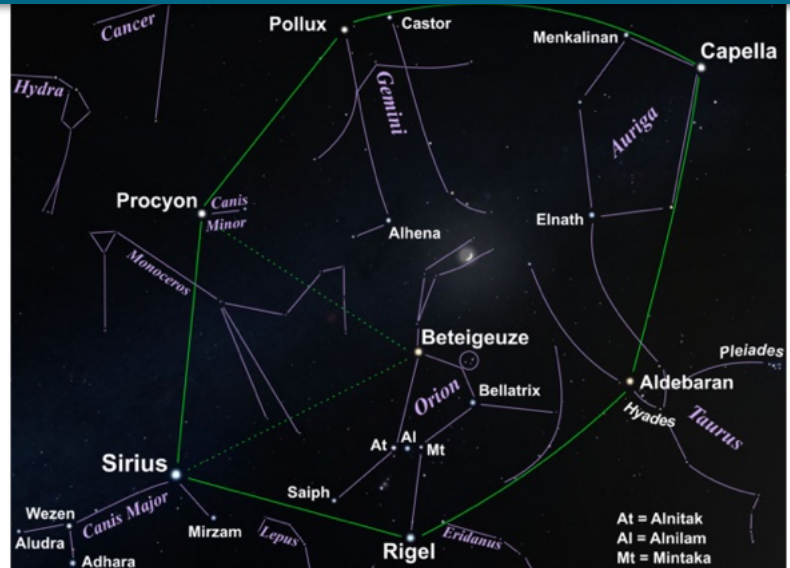
Neptune: in Pisces|

Deep Sky Objects

Easy (binoculars): M 42, M 41,
NGC 869/884, Pleiades, Algol

Moderate (small telescopes):
M 79, M 47, M 78, C 49/50
(Rosette Neb.)

Challenges: NGC 1535, C 7
(NGC 2403), Flame Neb. (NGC
2024), C 31 (Flaming Star
Neb.)



Happy New Year!

2024 promises to be exciting! We have a nearly-total eclipse in April, and hopefully many clear nights to explore the skies.

Braving the long winter nights, Orion dominates the sky. A ring of bright stars — the Winter Hexagon — with red Betelgeuse near the center, encircles a region full of star clusters and nebulae. Often neglected constellation Monoceros (between Sirius and Procyon, and our “featured constellation” for this month - check our Facebook page) contains the Rosette Nebula, bright enough to see in binoculars and small telescopes (under dark skies) with the Harp cluster at its center.

Almost Total Solar Eclipse - April 8

For a couple of hours in the afternoon, the Moon will cover up to 96% of the Sun’s disk in North Adams. This will be an opportunity for the NBAS to do some public outreach; stay tuned (and come to our meetings) for developments!



This Month's Image

The Orion Nebula (M 42 and M 43) is visible to the naked eye in the "sword" of Orion. It's a huge star forming region just over 1300 light years away: it's illumination by several newborn stars recently formed.

There are several interesting nebulae in Orion all part of the same molecular cloud complex: the Flame, Horsehead, Running Man nebulae are all part of it.

Interacting

Check out our Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nberkastro>

and join us at our next meetings: Jan. 3 and Feb. 7 at 6 PM at the North Adams Public Library, or our February meeting on Feb.

Nebulae

Some winter nebulae: while many are only really visible with long-exposure astrophotography, their shapes are truly fascinating.

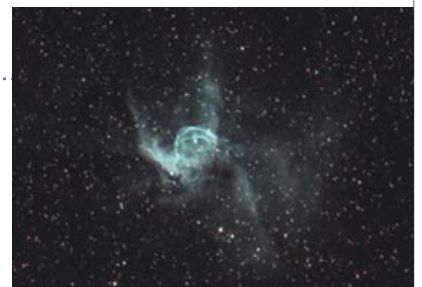
Flame + Horsehead

Surrounding the Orion's Belt star Alnitak, are these well-known nebulae, but need a moderate telescope and very dark skies (or a camera).



Thor's Helmet

You'll need a 10" scope or camera to see this distant (12,000 light years) nebula in Canis Major, 8° NE of Sirius.



Dolphin Head

In the other direction, 8° S of Sirius is even more-challenging Sh2-308, a nebula formed about 70,000 years ago.



Witch's Head

In Eridanus near Orion and Rigel, is this faint and large reflection nebula.



Here's a finding chart for all four of these and other nearby nebulae.