





Northern Berkshire Astronomical Society

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

This Month

Galaxies and the Messier
marathon!

The Moon

-  - Mar 6
-  - Mar 14: "Worm" Moon
-  - Mar 22
-  - Mar 29

Planets

Mercury: low at sunset,

Venus: SW after sunset

Mars: in Gemini

Jupiter: in Taurus

Uranus: in Taurus near M 45

Deep Sky Objects

Easy (binoculars): M 44, M 67,
NGC 2420, M 81 (challenge!)

Moderate (small telescopes):
NGC 2903, C 7 (NGC 2403)

Challenges: C 25 (NGC 2419),
C 59 (NGC 3242),

Galaxy Season is Starting!

Spring means galaxies!
While there are several
hundred reachable with
a larger (or imaging)
telescope, many can be
found with smaller
scopes. In particular,
there are groups of
galaxies: M 81/M 82/
NGC 3077, the Leo
Triplet (at M 66), the
Leo Quartet (here as
Hickson Group 44), and
the M 105 group. All of these galaxies are brighter than 11th
magnitude/



Lunar Eclipse!

The early morning of Mar 14th we have a total eclipse of the
Moon. The "good part" starts around 1AM, lasting for ~2 hours.

Interacting

Check out our Facebook Group

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

and join us at our next meeting: **Apr 2nd at 6 PM** at the North
Adams Public Library.



This Month's Image

NGC 2903 is just west of the "Sickle" of Leo - 1.5° south of λ (Lambda) Leonis. Strangely, though this intermediate spiral galaxy (type: SAbc) is bright (9th magnitude) and large (11.5'x5.3') it's neither in the Messier or the Caldwell catalogs!

So this makes it a particularly fun challenge, as a "hidden find" as the "galaxy season" spring constellations come into view.

It's 30 Mly away, and one of the closer members of the Virgo supercluster.

The Messier Marathon

Due to a quirk of the distribution of the objects in the Messier catalog: i.e., there are few objects close to the Ecliptic in Pisces and Aquarius, there's a small window from the mid-March into early April where it is *technically possible* to view all 110 objects in the Messier Catalog in one night.



Ideally, this is done from lower latitudes, but it can also be attempted from northern mid-latitudes. It doesn't require a large telescope - 4"-6" are sufficient enough. Either the weekend of the 22nd or the 29th falls in the window - aided by the New Moon on the 29th.

You'll begin observing as soon as the Sun sets: one of the largest challenges happens at the very outset: bagging galaxies M 74 (in Pisces) and M 77 (in Cetus), both of which are particularly difficult owing to their low surface brightnesses.

From there you work West to East zig-zagging from North to South and back again. You'll spend quite a bit of time in Ursa Major/Coma Berenices/Virgo of course, and again in Sagittarius.

The last challenge is the globular M30 in Capricorn: one trick is to offset from a nearby star and wait for it to slide into view (by this point you're really racing the clock and morning twilight).

