Northern Berkshire Astronomical Society

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

This Month

Early morning Lyrids (Apr 23)

The Moon

- Apr 5
- Apr 13: "Pink" Moon
- Apr 21
- Apr 27

Planets

Mercury, low at sunrise,

Venus: before sunrise

Mars: in Gemini/Cancer

Jupiter: in Taurus

Saturn: is in Psc, low at sunrise

Uranus: in Taurus near M 45

Deep Sky Objects

Easy (binoculars): M 81 and M104 (challenges!) Mel 111, Alcor/Mizar

Moderate (small telescopes): M 99, NGC 4244, M 51, M 94

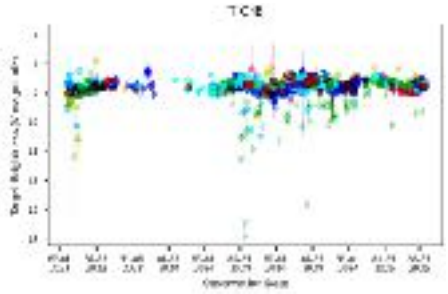
Challenges: Markerian's Chain, NGC 4258, Leo Triplet, Leo Dwarf

Remember T CrB?

Orbit	Date
126	12 Aug 2024
127	27 Mar 2025
128	10 Nov 2025
129	25 Jun 2026

If it hasn't already blown, there are some indications that the accretion rate to the white dwarf has increased. An interesting analysis of the previous three eruptions finds that they are spaced by close to an integral number of orbits of the binary star pair: the orbital period is ~227.6 days, and it appears that the eruptions typically happen after 125–129 orbits (so there's a *range* in the frequency between 78–81 years - we're in year 79 now.

This means there are particular dates that *might* have a higher probability of being close to an eruption (within a few days; see the table to the right).



But we won't know until it happens! Fortunately, it's now above the horizon just after twilight in the East - easy to find as it's next to bright Arcturus.

This Month's Image

NGC 3344 in Leo Minor is the "Sliced Onion" Galaxy, almost face-on with several, thin and extensive spiral arms. It's about the same size as our Galaxy.

Being in a small faint constellation and not in the Messier/Caldwell catalogs, it might get overlooked, but it's generally findable in small telescopes (under dark skies). It's located East and slightly North of the "Sickle" asterism in Leo.

Interacting

Check out our Facebook Group

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

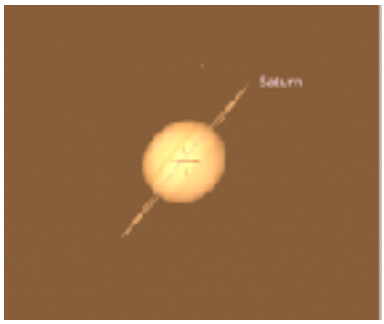
and join us at our next meeting: **May 7th at 6 PM** at the North Adams Public Library.

Smiley Morning

The morning of April 25th, there's a triple conjunction between Venus, Saturn and the crescent Moon (also Neptune and Mercury though they'll be largely invisible in the twilight).

The Moon's position and phase with the two bright planets make a "smiley face": the Moon's crescent is the small, and the two planets form the "eyes". Telescopically, the two planets are also interesting:

Venus is still a thinnish crescent, shining at magnitude -4.7: It will higher over the next few months, and will be the "morning star" all the way through to the end of the year.



Saturn fainter at mag 1.2 has almost edge-on rings that might be essentially invisible in small telescopes (the rings disappeared in late-March, though Saturn was behind the Sun at that time). They'll widen *slightly* through the Summer and into Fall, and then almost disappear against late in the year, after which they'll be one more visible heading into 2026.