

Northern Berkshire Astronomical Society

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

This Month

Early morning Eta Aquarid meteor shower (May 6th).

The Moon

-  - May 4
-  - May 12: "Flower" Moon
-  - May 20
-  - May 27

Planets

Mercury: low at sunrise,

Venus: before sunrise

Mars: in Cancer

Saturn: is in Psc, low at sunrise

Neptune: in Psc, near Saturn

Deep Sky Objects

Easy (binoculars): M 44, M 67, Alcor, M 3 (challenge!)

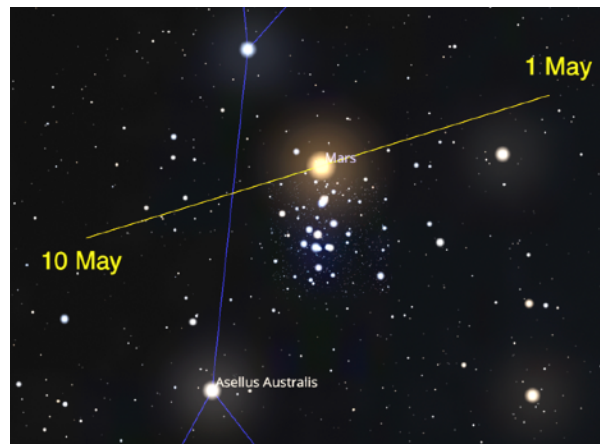
Moderate (small telescopes): M 97, M 81, M 108, M 3, M 101, M 51

Challenges: Leo Quartet, C 60/61, C 45, M 99

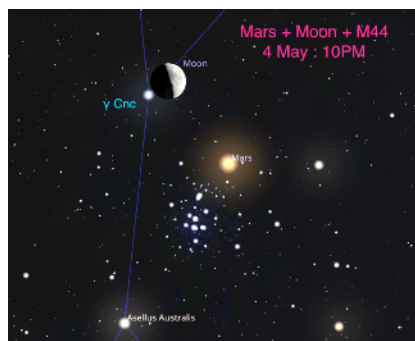
A Planet, a Star Cluster, and the Moon

Mars, the Moon, and the Beehive star cluster have several interactions over the first week of May!

First **Mars** is slowly traversing the cluster.



The Moon invades the region on the night May 3rd.



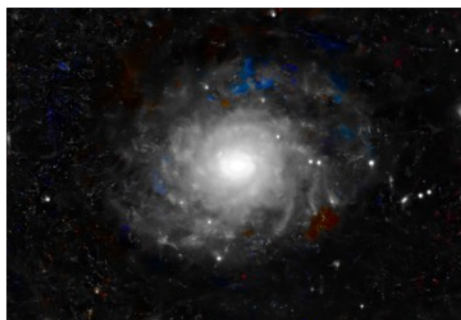
It will also occult the mag 4.6 star Gamma (γ) Cancri: the star will disappear behind the dark side of the lunar disk at about 10:10 PM (EST), and re-appear on the crescent side at 11:15 PM.



Begins:
10:10 PM

Ends:
11:15 PM





This Month's Image

NGC 3486 in Leo Minor is a face-on galaxy, with a large number of spiral arms, 27 Mly away. Even though it's comparatively large (7'x5') and bright (mag 10.5), it's not in either of the Messier or Caldwell catalogs (it did make it into the Herschel 400), which makes it comparable to more-popular objects like M 61 or M 77.

Interacting

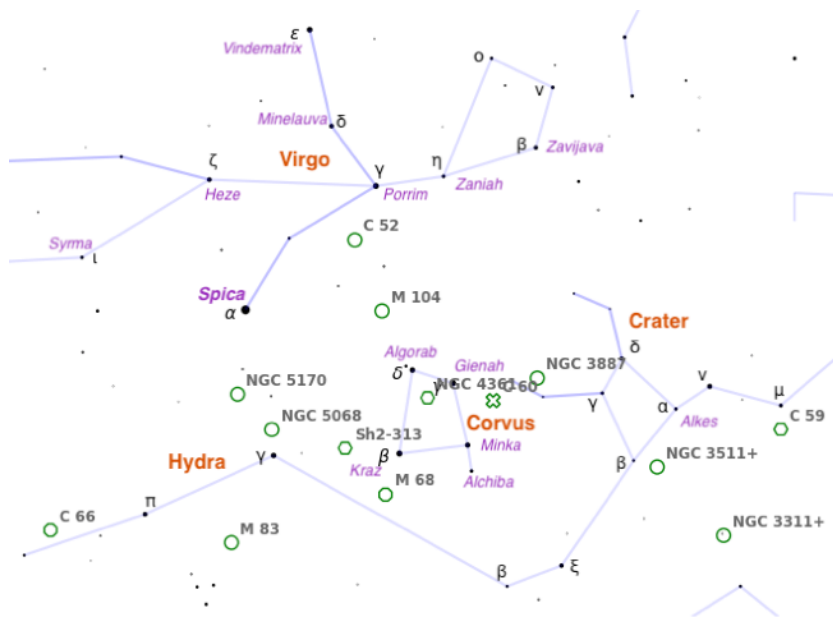
Check out our Facebook Group

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

and join us at our next meeting:

June 4th at 6 PM at the North Adams Public Library, where we'll have the next presentation in the series "What's Up in the Sky?" covering the Summer Milky Way constellations and deep-sky objects!

South of Spica



While our attentions are in the center of the Virgo galaxy cluster, we might overlook the more southern objects, made more difficult by their low altitudes! Yet, there are several "must see" things south of Spica!

M 104 (the Sombrero) is a good starting point, just West of Spica, but also **Caldwell 52** - a large bright elliptical to the NW. Moving down into *Corvus* (whose lopsided trapezoid is easy to spot) there's the interacting "Antenna" Galaxies **C 60/61**. To the west is the fainter *Crater* with the misty **NGC 3887** and galaxy pair **NGC 3511/3** to the SE. A further southern challenge is **NGC 3311** - the center of the Hydra galaxy cluster just below the 4.9 mag star HD 92036.

If you're getting bored with galaxies, then also check out three planetary nebulae - **Caldwell 59** (the "Ghost of Jupiter"), the "Lawn Sprinkler" (**NGC 4381**, in *Corvus*), and the dim but *large* **Sh2-313**. Plus there are also two globular clusters of note: **M 68** and **Caldwell 66** (a good challenge because it's one of the more distant clusters, and somewhat small).

Finally, over to the East, is the "Southern Pinwheel" **M 83**, plus two additional galaxies between Spica and Gamma Hydrae (which doesn't have a proper name), the face-on **NGC 5068** and the edge-on **NGC 5170**.