Northern Berkshire Astronomical Society

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This Month

Star forming regions: clusters plus nebulae!

The Moon

- Apr 2: Pink Moon
- Apr 10
- Apr 17
- Apr 24

Planets

Mercury: behind the Sun

Venus: sets after sunset

Mars: behind the Sun

Jupiter: in Gem, up all evening

Saturn: behind the Sun

Uranus: in Tau, evening

Neptune: behind the Sun

Deep Sky Objects

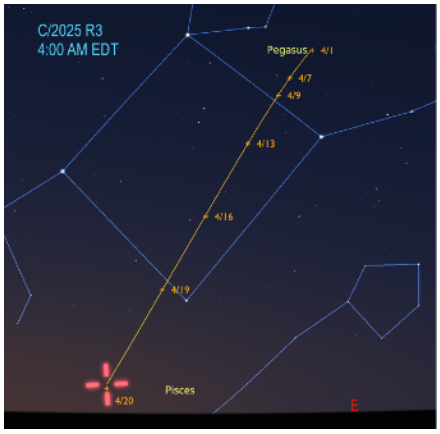
Easy (binoculars): M 44, Coma star cluster (Mel 111)

Moderate (small telescopes): Leo Triplet, M81/82, M 51, NGC 2903

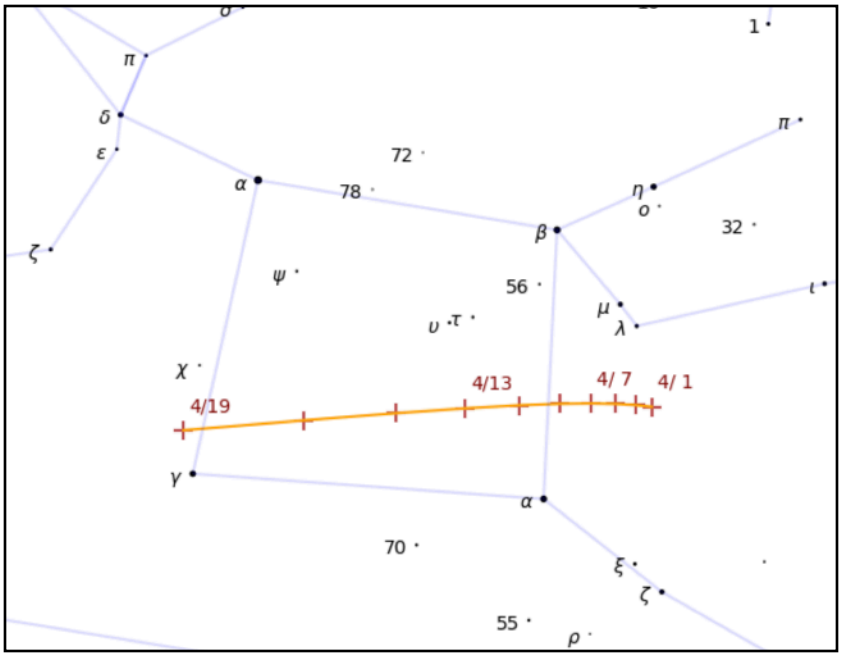
Challenges: M 101, C 60/61, C 59, M 79

Comet C/2025 R3 at Perihelion 4/19

This comet starts out faint, but has the chance it might be visible in binoculars as it gets closer to perihelion on the 19th. It's somewhat easy to find since it spend the first half of April crossing the Great Square of Pegasus.



It's an early-morning comet in the N Hemisphere the figure above is the for 4 AM (EDT): twilight begins around 4:30 AM and sunrise is just after 6 AM, so you'll have a narrow window to look for it!



This Month's Image

Sometimes just seeing *anything* on the image is the challenge! Here, that very dim misty "patch" is the elusive target of the Leo I Galaxy, so tenuous that it wasn't even discovered until 1950! It's a member of the Local Group, and at a distance of 780 kly (about 1/3rd of the way to Andromeda, though in the opposite direction) might be one of the most-distant satellites of our Galaxy. Aside from it being large and *very* dim, it's also a challenge because it's located only 12′ from the 1st magnitude star Regulus (whose glare can be seen in the lower-right of the image.

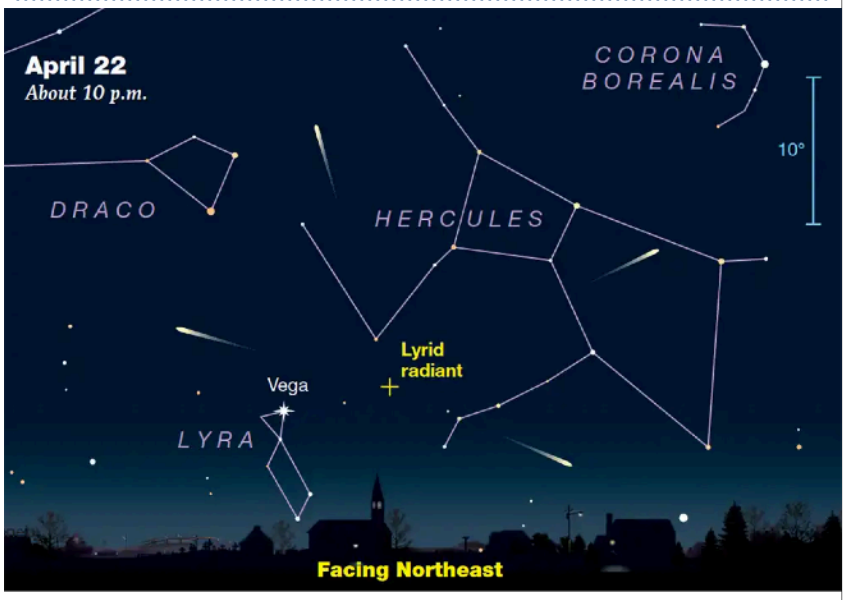
Interacting

Check out our Facebook Group

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

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

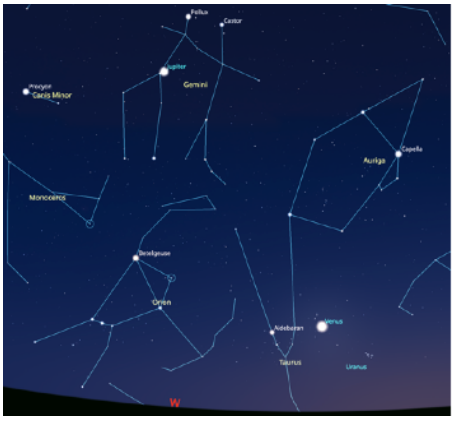
Lyrid Meteor Shower



One of the best meteor showers of the Spring are the Lyrids which peak on the 22nd (the crescent Moon will be up at sunset, but will sets just after midnight), though you'll see sporadic meteors over the second half of April. In the late evening, Lyra rises in the NE (easy to find from the 0th magnitude star Vega). These meteors are dust shed from the long-period comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher; observations of this shower go back to 687 BCE!

On average, you'll see about 10/hour with an average magnitude or about 2 (so brighter than most of the stars in the area), though occasional fireballs can happen, bright enough to cast shadows, and leave trails lasting a couple of minutes (in dark skies).

Like the Leonids, there are periodic "good years" for this shower - about every 60 years, but we're not due for one until c. 2042. Something to look forward to...



Venus is Back!

By the end of April you can see both Venus and Jupiter in the West - this is the view for the end of the month.

(Coming in June - Venus, Jupiter, and Mercury - just after sunset!)