



STARRY TRAILS

SEPTEMBER 2017

I hope you all had a chance to see the phenomenal Solar Eclipse!! Save the date for April 8th, 2024! It will be our turn for a Total Solar Eclipse!! In the meantime, we have so many spectacular celestial events to enjoy. This month we will say farewell to the king of the planets, Jupiter. We can still view Jupiter low in the west after sunset (Illustration 1). Saturn can be seen in the south, southwest (Illustration2). If you are an early morning riser, the planets Venus, Mercury & Mars, along with the star, Regulus, put on quite a show in the morning. September 18th will be the best morning to view, before sunrise (Illustration3).

At this time of year, it is great to head outside and spend a few minutes enjoying the late summer sounds! We can still enjoy some warm nights, but autumn is just around the corner. Are you ready to enjoy our starry hike? Grab your Starry Trail map, bug spray, binoculars, jacket and chair or blanket.

Our hike begins around 8:30pm. To start, we will face west or the spectacular colors of the sunset. Brilliant Jupiter will continue to sink lower each night. Farewell until next year. Turn to the left and you will notice a golden colored object, Saturn. What a lovely sight in a telescope! Head slightly right and down where the red, orange star Antares, the heart of Scorpio, can be found. Continue to head left of Antares to the constellation, Sagittarius, which looks more like a teapot. Between Scorpio and Sagittarius is the best part of the sky to scan with your binoculars and telescope! It is rich with deep sky wonders! (Illustration 4)

Turn right or back to direction west. Trek up and you will see a bright yellow, orange star, Arcturus. Arcturus has been with us since spring. Just above Arcturus, you will see a semi-circle of stars. It looks almost like a necklace, but actually it is the Northern Crown or Corona Borealis. I think it looks like a smiley face! Right overhead will be a keystone shape in the stars. This is the body of Hercules, the bravest and strongest hero! Binocular time! Take your binoculars and scan around the part of Hercules facing Corona. Do you see the fuzzy object? This is the finest Globular Star Cluster (M13) in the northern skies! (Illustration 5)

Turn right or north. The Big Dipper is beginning to swing down through the sky. Take the two stars at the end of the cup and draw an imaginary line to the next bright star. You have reached the North Star! The North Star, or Polaris, is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper. Also, to the right of the Little Dipper is Queen Cassiopeia, the W-shaped constellation. Grab your binoculars. From the top point of the W shape, scan slowly to the right and up slightly. Do you see a fuzzy circular shape? That is the Andromeda Galaxy. It is 2.5 million light years away! Find the bottom point of the W. Scan once again to the right and down slightly. You will come upon the Double Cluster in Perseus. (Illustration 6)

Hike again to the right and you will be facing east. When looking up overhead, you will see a very bright star, which is Vega. Journey down and to the left and you will come to Deneb. Now go right and you have reached Altair. When you connect these three bright stars you have made the Summer Triangle. Great job! Running through the Summer Triangle is the Milky Way, our galaxy! Pop open that lawn chair or lay out on your blanket. Take your binoculars and scan through that part of the sky from north to south. See all of those stars?! Even if you cannot view the Milky Way, due to light pollution, you can still see so many stars with your

binoculars! **Here is a challenge: scan to the left and up of Altair. Do you see the group of stars that resemble an upside-down coat hanger? Cool!**

Head back to Deneb. Imagine this to be the tail of Cygnus, the Swan. To the right will be three stars in a line. These would be the outstretched wings. You should also be able to see the long neck and head of the swan extending from the wings. The head of the swan would be directly below Vega. This star is Albireo, which is a beautiful double star through a telescope! If you look just below the Summer Triangle, you will see a group of stars that look like a kite. This is the constellation, Delphinus, the Dolphin. Journey below Delphinus. Notice four stars that form a square. This is the Great Square of Pegasus, a sure sign of autumn! (Illustration 7)

Take a few minutes and listen. Farewell summer until next year!

Highlights

Sept 1 – The Aurigid meteor shower peaks.

Sept 5 – Jupiter just north of Spica after sunset.

Sept 6 – Full Moon.

Sept 12 – Mercury puts on its best morning show of the year before dawn.

Sept 13 – Last Quarter Moon.

Sept 17 – The Crescent Moon south of Venus before dawn.

Sept 18 – The pre-dawn show of the Crescent Moon, Venus, Mercury, Mars and Regulus!

Sept 20 – New Moon.

Sept 22 – The Crescent Moon north of Jupiter after sunset.

Sept 22 – Autumn begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 4:02 pm.

Sept 26 – The Moon north of Saturn after sunset.

Sept 27 – First Quarter Moon.

Brightest Stars: West – Arcturus, Spica. **Overhead** – Vega, Deneb, Altair. **South** – Antares.

Binocular Highlights - The Moon, Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13, Milky Way from south to north starting between Scorpio and Sagittarius, Double Cluster (NGC 869 & 884), and Andromeda Galaxy (M31).

Telescope Highlights - The Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Albireo, M2, M3, M4, M6, M7, M8, M51, M13, M57, M81, M82, M10, M11, M12, M27, M15, M16, M17, M20, M21, M22, M23, M25, M31, M39, M92 and NGC 869&884.

Starry Trails is a fun & easy way to explore the night sky as it appears from your own backyard!

Journey over to **StarryTrails.com** & get everything you need to navigate the night sky! Starry Trails is a free publication & your able to make copies to pass along to your friends & family so they can learn and enjoy the night sky with you! **You can Follow [Starry Trails on Facebook](#) for weekly discussions & special sky events!**

Night Sky Illustrations created by Suzie Dills using Starry Night Backyard & Stellarium.

Illustrations courtesy of www.CassandraDills.com

Written by Suzie Dills – Remember to download your Illustrations & Star Map!