

Mountaineer Skies

From the Editor's Desk –

This year, 2006, the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Dog, starts on January 29. It traditionally begins when the second new moon after the winter solstice appears.

The **Quadrantid** meteor shower, first identified on January 2, 1825 by an Italian, Antonio Brucalassi, will begin on December 28, 2005 and continue through January 7, 2006 with the maximum occurring on January 3, 2006.

The Vernal Equinox, or the first day of Spring, begins on Monday, March 20 this year. Remember that seasons are reversed in the southern hemisphere so that in Australia, March 20 is the first day of fall, also known as the Autumnal Equinox.

The word "Equinox" means a period of equal length of daylight and darkness, so that on the first day of Spring and the first day of Autumn, the period of light equals the period of darkness.

Rise and Set Times

Beginning of January, 2006

	Const	Rise	Transit	Set	Mag
Sun		7:41	12:23	17:06	-26.8
Mercury	Sgr	6:45	11:23	15:59	-0.5
Venus	Sgr	8:34	13:41	18:42	-4.4
Mars	Ari	13:07	20:07	3:07	-0.6
Jupiter	Lib	3:06	8:17	13:32	-1.9
Saturn	Cnc	19:17	2:22	9:28	1.5

Beginning of February, 2006

	Const	Rise	Transit	Set	Mag
Sun		7:27	12:33	17:40	-26.8
Mercury	Cap	7:51	12:53	17:56	-1.3
Venus	Sgr	5:26	10:35	15:49	-4.6
Mars	Ari	11:34	18:50	2:03	0.2
Jupiter	Lib	1:23	6:31	11:39	-2.0
Saturn	Cnc	17:02	00:11	7:19	1.5

Beginning of March, 2006

	Const	Rise	Transit	Set	Mag
Sun		6:51	12:32	18:12	-26.8
Mercury	Psc	7:16	13:26	19:32	0.9
Venus	Sgr	4:28	9:35	14:43	-4.6
Mars	Tau	10:29	17:57	1:23	0.8
Jupiter	Lib	23:40	4:47	9:53	-2.2
Saturn	Cnc	15:02	22:13	5:23	1.7

Ari	Aries, The Ram
Cap	Capricornus, the Goat
Cnc	Cancer, The Crab
Lib	Libra, The Scales
Psc	Pisces, The Fishes
Sgr	Sagittarius, The Archer
Tau	Taurus, The Bull

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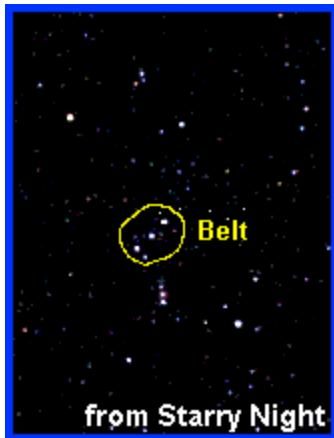
About: Finding Orion, The Hunter, in The Night Sky

A constellation is simply a group of stars that form a stick figure image in the night sky, not unlike a child's dot-to-dot picture. These images are often of animals such as Taurus, the Bull; Ursa Major, the Great Bear; or Hydra, the Water Snake, or of mythological characters like Orion, the Hunter; Auriga, the Charioteer; or Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer.

There are 88 constellations in the sky, but finding any single one is more difficult than you might suppose. The primary reason for this difficulty is that there are an awful lot of stars out there and it is very hard to know which ones to connect. Some constellations are easy to spot and some are not. Remember that constellations came from the imagination of people just trying to explain a world that they could not completely understand, not unlike what we do today.

In winter, the most prominent southern constellation is Orion, The Hunter. Fortunately it is not too hard to find. On January 15 at 9:00 P.M. you will find this constellation in the southeastern (135°) part of the sky. On February 15, at 9:00 P.M. it will have moved to almost due south (180°), and on March 15, Orion is located in the southwestern (225°) sky at 9:00 P.M. A compass is useful in finding these directions.

The first part of Orion that you usually see will be the three stars in a row on a diagonal that form Orion's belt.



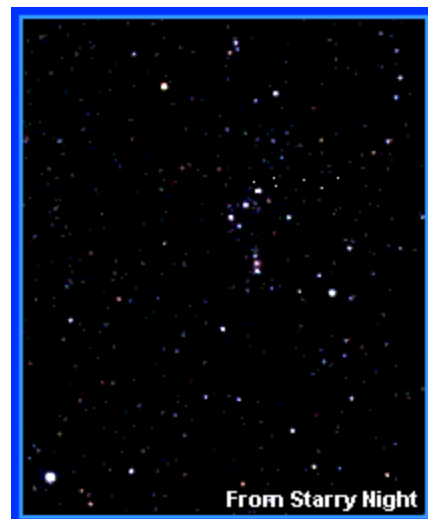
After you have found his belt, you can then look for the four stars that outline his body forming a rectangle.



And finally, on a very clear evening, if you look below Orion's belt, you can see his sword.



Below is what you see when you look for Orion. Fortunately the stars in Orion are brighter than most of the surrounding stars, so if you are looking in the right direction using your compass, you should be able to find it.



2006 Planetarium Shows



January 13 & 27, 2006 <i>Hubble Vision 2</i>	February 10 & 24, 2006 <i>Hubble Vision 2</i>	March 10 & 24, 2006 <i>Hubble Vision 2</i>
April 14 & 28, 2006 <i>Hubble Vision 2</i>	May 12 & 26, 2006 <i>Hubble Vision 2</i>	June 9, 2006 <i>Hubble Vision 2</i>

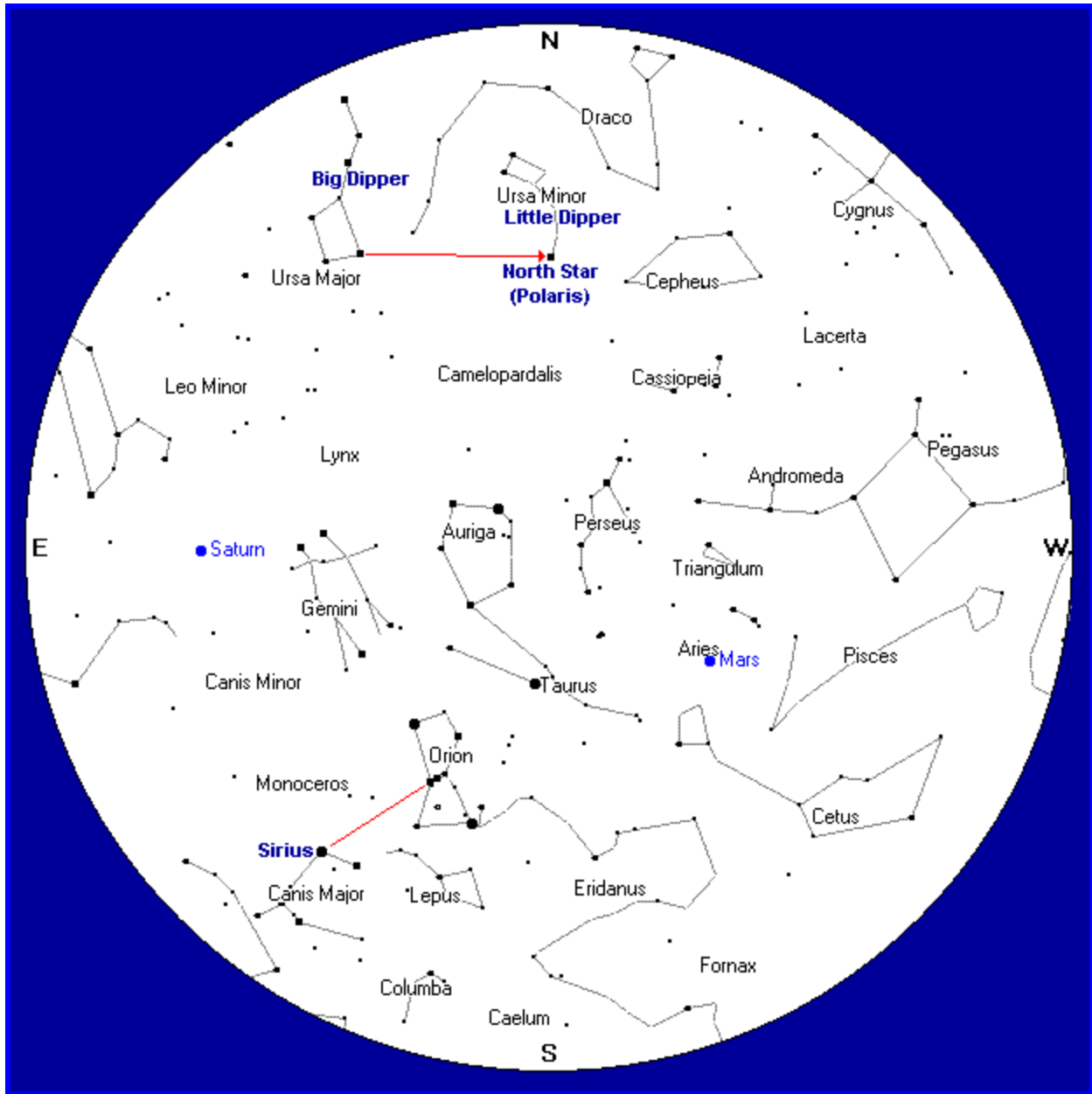
For those who are interested in bringing a group, such as schools or scouts, during the day, please call for more information. These shows are usually given on Tuesday or Thursday mornings.

For further information or reservations, please call John Hopkins at (304)293-3422, extension 1443 or by email at: jhopkins@mail.wvu.edu

Selected Sunrise/Sunset and Moon Rise/Moon Set Times (2006)

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Moon Rise	Moon Set	Moon Phase
Jan 6	7:40 A.M.	5:09 P.M.	11:50 A.M.	NA	First Qtr
Jan 14	7:39 A.M.	5:17 P.M.	5:30 P.M.	8:13 A.M.	Full Moon
Jan 22	7:35 A.M.	5:26 P.M.	12:35 A.M.	11:21 A.M.	Last Qtr
Jan 29	7:30 A.M.	5:34 P.M.	7:55 A.M.	5:47 P.M.	New Moon
Feb 5	7:23 A.M.	5:43 P.M.	11:14 A.M.	1:19 A.M.	First Qtr
Feb 12	7:16 A.M.	5:51 P.M.	5:27 P.M.	7:18 A.M.	Full Moon
Feb 21	7:04 A.M.	6:01 P.M.	1:43 A.M.	10:55 A.M.	Last Qtr
Feb 27	6:56 A.M.	6:08 P.M.	6:56 A.M.	5:56 P.M.	New Moon
Mar 6	6:45 A.M.	6:16 P.M.	10:28 A.M.	1:25 A.M.	First Qtr
Mar 14	6:33 A.M.	6:24 P.M.	6:20 P.M.	6:30 A.M.	Full Moon
Mar 22	6:20 A.M.	6:32 P.M.	1:47 A.M.	10:30 A.M.	Last Qtr
Mar 29	6:09 A.M.	6:39 P.M.	6:13 A.M.	7:19 P.M.	New Moon

January 2006 Sky Chart* for:
 10:00 P.M at the beginning of the month
 9:00 P.M in the middle of the month
 8:00 P.M at the end of the month



*Sky Chart used with the kind permission of **Heavens-Above** at <http://www.heavens-above.com/>

The TOMCHIN PLANETARIUM is named in honor of the late Harold Tomchin, of Princeton, W.Va., who made a generous donation to ensure its continuing operation, and whose family continues to support the planetarium for the educational benefit of WVU students, staff, and faculty members, as well as the local community. Contributions can be made in support of the planetarium through the **WVU Planetarium Project** at the **WVU Foundation, Inc.**, phone (304)284-4000. Thank You.



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