

Mountaineer Skies

From the Editors Desk

Although just a curiosity, there are two new moons this month, one on the first day of the month, Thursday, May 1 and the other on the last day of the month, Saturday, May 31. This is not a blue moon as a blue moon is the second full moon in a calendar month.

We also have a total lunar eclipse this month that can be viewed from the Americas late on the evening of May 15 and early on the morning of May 16. The moon will be in the constellation Libra, the Scales.

Begins	Thursday, May 15 at 23:14 EDT
Maximum	Thursday, May 15 at 23:40 EDT
Ends	Friday, May 16 at 00:07 EDT

Sunset on May 15 is at 20:27 EDT and moon rise occurs 16 minutes earlier at 20:11 EDT.

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In The Sky This Month

Visible Planets in the Night Sky

Beginning of May, 2003

	Const	Rise	Transit	Set	Mag
Sun		6:16	13:17	20:17	- 26.8
Mercury	Ari	6:32	13:49	21:00	4.0
Venus	Psc	5:13	11:31	17:48	- 3.9
Mars	Cap	2:21	7:16	12:13	0.0
Jupiter	Cnc	12:19	19:30	2:41	- 2.1
Saturn	Tau	8:56	16:26	23:52	2.5

Middle of May, 2003

	Const	Rise	Transit	Set	Mag
Sun		6:01	13:16	20:31	- 26.8
Mercury	Ari	5:34	12:28	19:19	3.0
Venus	Psc	4:59	11:39	18:17	- 3.9
Mars	Cap	1:52	6:54	11:56	- 0.3
Jupiter	Cnc	11:27	18:40	1:50	- 2.1
Saturn	Ori	8:07	15:37	23:04	2.5

End of May, 2003

	Const	Rise	Transit	Set	Mag
Sun		5:51	13:17	20:44	- 26.8
Mercury	Ari	4:51	11:42	18:33	0.7
Venus	Ari	4:48	11:51	18:53	- 3.9
Mars	Cap	1:17	6:26	11:35	- 0.7
Jupiter	Cnc	10:35	17:46	00:53	- 2.0
Saturn	Ori	7:13	14:43	22:09	2.4

Ari	Aries, The Ram
Psc	The Fishes
Cap	Capricornus, The Goat
Cnc	Cancer, The Crab
Tau	Taurus, The Bull
Ori	Orion, The Hunter

About: Crop Circles, part 2

Dave and Doug continued to make crop circles of ever increasing size and complexity in local cultivated fields, usually near the town of Warminster in Wiltshire, an area known for flying saucer activity by the local folks. This went on for 13 years and over 200 geometric circles. Almost unbelievably, they were never discovered and for the first seven years even their wives did not know the truth.

As you might expect, people, who came to be called cereologists, began investigating the phenomenon using methods of questionable scientific value. After these investigations were conducted, books were written, TV interviews and lectures were given. All were directed toward explaining the author's views of who made the crop circles and what they meant.

As you might imagine, the perpetrators were really having a great time knowing that their hoax was fooling everyone, including those who should have known better.

It appears that the investigators worked backwards, that is, they immediately assumed that the crop circles were made by aliens and then tried to find evidence that supported this view. What they should have done was to objectively survey the sites and try to explain their origin, using **Occam's Razor** which states that, on the whole, the simplest solution is most likely to be the correct one.

This means that you should look for the simplest explanation first, and when the simplest theory does not explain the phenomena, then try the next simplest

one and so on. Surely one of the simplest explanations would be that someone was playing a joke on the community. Alien space ships are way down on the list of likely candidates.

Doug and Dave continued to enjoy the hoopla that their hoax generated, both by the media and especially by those who took their creations seriously. Finally in 1991 they decided that they wanted to come clean. However, nobody believed them.

Many of the cereologists had become so fanatical about the crop circles that they could not admit that they had been fooled, so consequently, they branded the two as liars. To complicate things, imitators continued to make as many as fifty crop circles every summer and not just in England. Finally in early 1999 they appeared on a BBC show called "TV Country File Special" about Crop Circles, showed how they made the images, and were finally able to convince the public that they, not little green men, were indeed responsible for the mysterious patterns.

With reluctance, most people accepted Doug and Dave's detailed explanation. However, there continue to be diehards who still insist that some circles, at least, must be of unexplainable origin. Admittedly, it is more fun to believe that the figures were made by aliens, but this view does not hold up to the light of facts.

For more information about how crop circles can be made, see

www.crackedpleasures.net/cullen-cakes/cropcircles/howto.html

2003 Planetarium Shows



Narrated by Patrick Stewart

http://www.as.wvu.edu/~planet/mars_quest.htm

May 9 & 23, 2003 <i>MarsQuest</i>	June 13, 2003 <i>MarsQuest</i>	July, 2003 Closed
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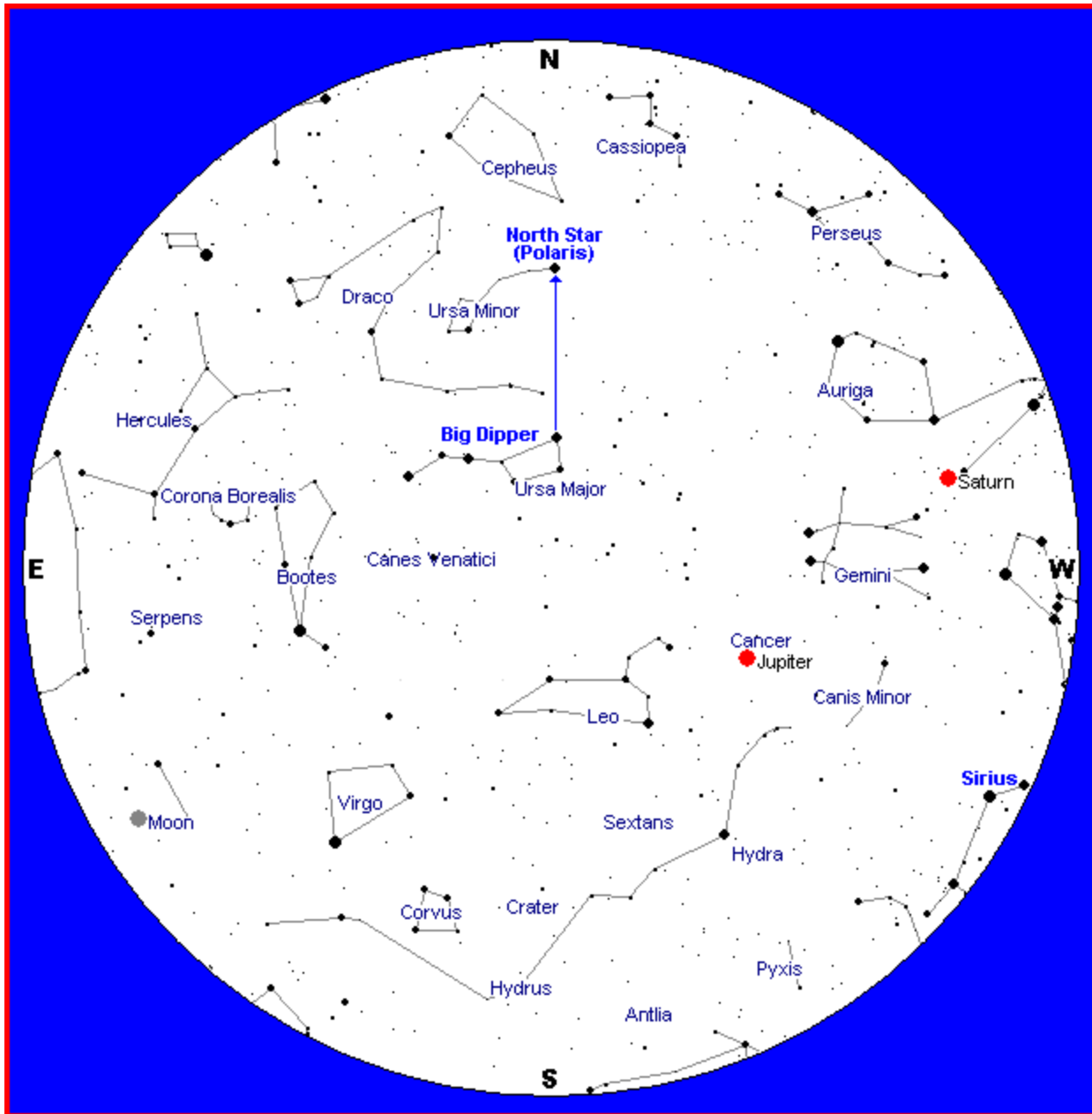
For those who are interested in bringing a group, such as schools or scouts, during the day, please call for more information. These shows are usually given on Tuesday or Thursday mornings.

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

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Moon Rise	Moon Set	Moon Phase
May 1	6:21 A.M.	8:12 P.M.	6:32 A.M.	8:34 P.M.	New Moon
May 9	6:12 A.M.	8:20 P.M.	12:45 P.M.	2:45 A.M.	First Quarter
May 15	6:06 A.M.	8:25 P.M.	8:11 P.M.	5:44 A.M.	Full Moon
May 22	6:00 A.M.	8:32 P.M.	2:13 A.M.	12:24 P.M.	Last Quarter
May 30	5:55 A.M.	8:38 P.M.	5:30 A.M.	8:27 P.M.	New Moon

May 2003 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](http://www.heavens-above.com/) 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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