



FROM NIGHT VISIONS

DECEMBER 2010

Next Meeting: Monday, December 6
Observatory Christmas Party: 7 p.m.

This will be a potluck event so please bring a side dish or a desert. The club will provide tableware, drinks, ice and a meat cold cut dish. Please plan to arrive early (about 6:30) so we can get everything set up and start at 7:00pm. Call the Observatory at 768-9948 if you have any questions. Make plans now to attend! See you there!

Program

Food, and music
Keep looking up!
Craig, Ed.



President's Message—December Newsletter

Another year is quickly coming to an end and we still see the same star patterns in the sky that we saw there last year, namely the great ORION, TAURUS, the PLEIDES, etc. Except for the cold weather, this is one of the best viewing seasons of the year and 2010 is turning out to be fantastic. If you wrap up to stay warm, you cannot beat the winter sky.

I recall reading of Leslie Peltier in his book *Starlight Nights* of how he would wrap up to stay warm in the Ohio winter of the 1920's as he looked at the sky from his homemade observatory in his father's pasture. If he could wrap up to stay warm to use the technology available back then, we can surely find a way to stay warm today with everything we have to work with.

Right now, Orion is making its entrance over the trees in the East and opening to us its beauty of the GREAT ORION NEBULA, the belt stars and the oversized Red Giant of Betelgeuse.

JUPITER has been giving us a good show for several months and its moons have been dancing in the heavens to everyone's thrill. It is always interesting to see the different positions that the Galilean moons are in and to think that we are seeing the same thing that Galileo saw—only in much more detail and grandeur. No matter what time of year we are observing, we can always see something that Galileo found, whether it be the Galilean moons, the rings of Saturn, the phases of Venus or the mountains of the Moon, his work still gets "oohs" and "aahs" from the viewers.

This administration has stressed the continued need for various projects for the members to participate in. At our last meeting in November, we talked about all of the observing projects or "clubs" offered by the Astronomical League. If any members want to pursue a certificate of accomplishment from the League, BRAS will pay the bill for any of the League's materials to help you gain that certificate. The materials will simply be added to the supply of BRAS publications available for all members.

We are approaching the 30th year in 2011 since BRAS was founded in 1981. It started with a few people at the Idlewild observatory at Clinton and continued to its beginnings at the EBR Library for its first meetings. Considering that it was just a few people with some neat ideas in their mind, we must all agree that it has developed into quite an organization. Although we cannot take full credit for HRPO, I think it is clear that without BRAS's encouragement and support, HRPO would either not be here or not be the quality facility that it has grown to be. If you see one of the "old timers" from the early days, be sure to tell them thank you for helping us get started. The currently active members that were instrumental in getting BRAS started were Craig Brenden, Wally Purcell, Donald Brock and Bob Sinitiere. Within a few years of the initial beginnings, Merrill Hess joined BRAS and can be considered one of the early "old timers" as well.

Thanks to those who help to get BRAS started and for keeping it going for 30 years.....

I look forward to seeing all of the membership at our Christmas party on Monday, December 6.



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MEETING NOTES FROM THE VP

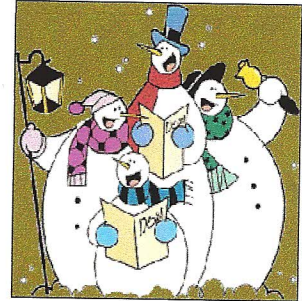
Hey Everyone,

Our meeting in November was great! We had some nice pictures and great accounts of the Deep South Regional Stargaze. By Wally's census, we had around 22 members present at various times during the event accounting for about 20% of the total attendance. Not a bad showing from our club! I had a great time up there and can't recommend these star parties enough. It's a great time getting out to a nice dark sky and seeing so many friendly people and all the wonderful equipment set up all over the place. If you've never been to one, keep the Rockefeller Retreat and Hodges Gardens in mind. We should be hearing a bit more about Rockefeller at this month's meeting and you can get more information on Hodges Gardens at our website. Remember, this month's meeting is being held a week early to prevent a conflict with the HRPO being open to the public for the meteor shower. It will be Monday, December 6th at 7PM. HRPO, as usual.

It is our annual end-of-the-year Christmas party and pot luck dinner. Bring some food and help eat some, too! My wonderful wife has once again consented (a.k.a. been tricked) to provide some music on her harp while we eat and socialize. We are also fielding any additional nominations for officers and voting for said officer positions for the next year.

Hope to see you all there! (And not just because that means MORE FOOD!)

Ben Toman
BRAS VP



B.R.A.S. MEETING NOTES 11-7-'10

7:15 Start Pres. Marvin Owen - starts Intros from all attending.

New members Jeff, Greg, Lisa.

A lot of bits & parts were pre-pulled out of the BRAS closet for recycle & disposal at end of meeting.

Merrell reports Karen Taylor sent a letter after the Deep South Star Party saying she & family enjoyed it & became excited about it.

The 1st Monday, Dec. 6th, is the eating meeting. Moved due to next Monday's meteor shower. The starting late Monday night, 20/21 of Dec. is a Lunar Eclipse.

This is also the Officer's Election Meeting. Nominations are still open.

So far we have for President - Marvin Owen, Vice Pres. - Ben Toman,

Secretary- Dave Thomas or Charles Edwards, Treasurer-Bob Sinitiere

Ben mentioned Astronomical League projects of interest & availability. Trevor mentioned a Messier Marathon plan, & Chris submitted his Lunar Club Observations for credit to the League. Future projects include "Dark Skys & Constellations" & "Ghost Hunt Challenge".

Don Weinell - Jan.28th thru 30th Rockefeller trip is \$10 per adult a night.

P.A.S. 22 B.R.A.S. members attended Deep South Gaze. Next year they are going to stress "This isn't an Outreach Program". They don't want casual visitors that don't control their light pollution. It is on Oct. 26th--30th of 2011. Pictures of the event for our website would be appreciated. Ben had some. Also, we need the URL for the gaze sign-up next year.

Craig is in Washington State for his Dad.

The program Friday night, Nov. 11th, is "Buying your 1ST 'SCOPE, & volunteers are needed.

Corry has offered to park his 14" Meade out here for our use. Thank You, Corry.

1st Annual Award for Excellence in Astronomy Science is in the works.

Art is gathering ideas on procedure for putting displays on B.R.A.S. TV.

4" Meade for sale-see Wally (Mary's 'scope)

8:25 Close meeting Dave Thomas-Secretary

MESSAGE FROM HRPO

Mike Carambat has been catching some amazing fireballs with his new all-sky camera. His just-registered URL (www.oakgroveobservatory.com) has the footage on its front page. The American Meteor Society does state a live viewer will see a fireball of at least -4 magnitude for every cumulative total of twenty hours spent looking.

Trevor McGuire (with some patrons) saw two fireballs about forty-five minutes apart at HRPO while operating the 12" Dob the night of the 20th. New member Geoff Michelli saw the second one.

I know this sounds early, but I start the arrangements for International Astronomy Day six months ahead of time. The 2011 IAD will be Saturday, 7 May from 3pm to 11pm. Please start thinking about whether you will be able to devote two to four hours on site. The 2010 event saw 788 visitors; we're looking at possibly 1000 visitors this go-round!

Christopher

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: ON-SITE

Geminid Meteor Shower: Monday, 13 December from 9pm to 1am.
One volunteer for two hours. As a floater/greeter.

Evening Sky Viewing: Saturdays from 6pm to 9pm or 7pm to 10pm.

One or two volunteers. To staff marshmallow roast, work simple 6" Dob, demonstrate air cannon, gyroscope, etc. All needed training given. NOTE: We really do not need volunteers on Friday nights. NOTE: Volunteer does not have to come every Saturday night.

HRPO FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

*10 DECEMBER: "The Star of Bethlehem"

*17 DECEMBER: "The Mars Report"

*24 DECEMBER: *{closed}*

*31 DECEMBER: *{closed}*

*7 JANUARY: "2010—The Space Year in Review"

LANDOLT OBSERVATORY VIEWING

at Nicholson Hall

Saturday, 11 December from 6pm to 7pm

BRAS Observing Notes December

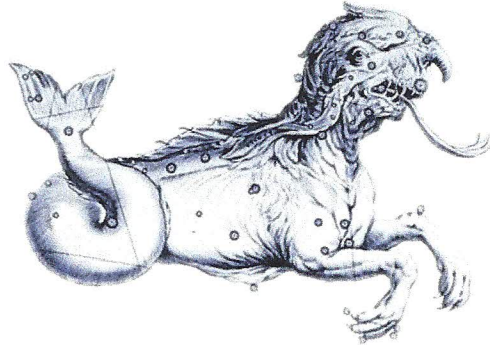
Constellation of the Month

Cetus: The Sea Monster

The story of the beautiful Andromeda and her boastful mother tells of a savage sea monster sent by a furious king Poseidon to teach the mortals a lesson about humility. It is this sea monster which appears in the heavens as the constellation Cetus.

Cetus is a strange and terrifying beast indeed. The Greeks pictured it as having large open jaws, the feet and legs of a land animal, skin like a fish and a huge coiled up tail like a serpent. Andromeda was offered up as a sacrifice to the monster and chained to a rock to await her fate. Like in all good stories however the hero slays the monster and gets the girl in the end.

Cetus contains the star Mira (Omicron Ceti), which is the first variable star to be discovered. It is a red giant which oscillates in brightness over a period of 332 days between a high of magnitude 2 and a low of magnitude 10.1. Mira is the brightest variable star in the sky that is not visible to the naked eye during some part of its cycle. It is currently at about magnitude 3.2 and visible in the early evening.



Sky Chart

Position in the Sky

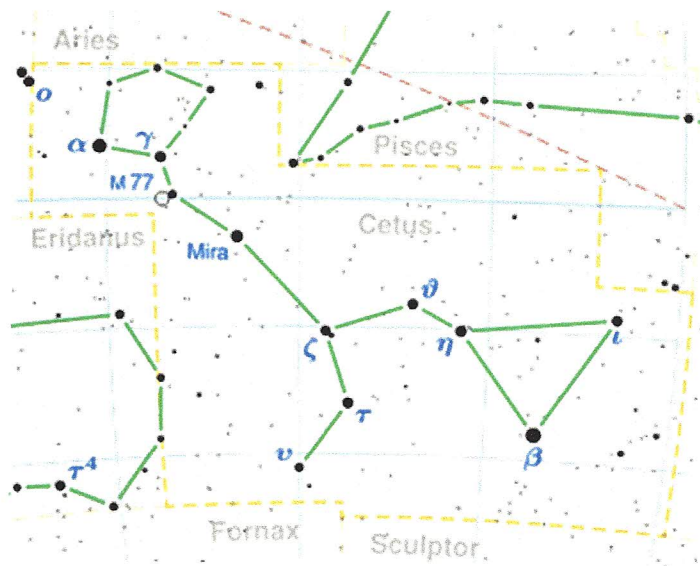
Right Ascension: 2 hours
Declination: -10 degrees

Named Stars

MENKAR (Alpha Cet)
DIPHDA (Beta Cet)
Kaffaljdhma (Gamma Cet)
Baten Kaitos (Zeta Cet)
Dheneb (Eta Cet)
Deneb Kaitos Shemali (Iota Cet)
Menkar (Lambda Cet)
MIRA (Omicron Cet)

Messier Objects

M77 (spiral galaxy)



BRAS Dark Sky Site Viewing Dates

December 4th and 11th 2010 / January 1st and 8th 2011

For more information check out the BRAS website at <http://www.braastro.org>

Art Barrios
BRAS Observing Chairman
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The Evening Sky Map

FREE* EACH MONTH FOR YOU TO EXPLORE, LEARN & ENJOY THE NIGHT SKY

WWW.SKYPAPPS.COM

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
DECEMBER 2010

Sky Calendar - December 2010

- 1 Moon near Saturn (morning sky) at 13h UT. Mag. +0.9.
- 1 Mercury at greatest elongation, 22° east from Sun (evening sky) at 16h UT. Mag. -0.4.
- 2 Moon near Spica (morning sky) at 3h UT.
- 2 Venus at its brightest at 11h UT (morning sky). Mag. -4.7.
- 2 Moon near Venus at 18h UT (morning sky).
- 5 New Moon at 17:36 UT. Start of lunation 1088.
- 7 Moon near Mercury at 7h UT (19° from Sun). Mag. -0.1.
- 13 Moon at apogee (farthest from Earth) at 9h UT (distance 404,406 km; angular size 29.3').
- 13 First Quarter Moon at 13:59 UT.
- 13 Moon near Jupiter at 21h UT. Mag. -2.5.
- 14 Geminid Meteor Shower peaks at 11h UT. Produces bright, medium-speed meteors at its peak (up to 80 meteors/hour). Very favorable viewing conditions this year.
- 19 Moon near Aldebaran (evening sky) at 23h UT.
- 20 Mercury at inferior conjunction with the Sun at 1h UT. Mercury passes into the morning sky.
- 21 Full Moon at 8:13 UT.
- 21 Total Eclipse of the Moon begins at 7:41 UT and ends at 8:53 UT. Mid-eclipse at 8:17 UT. Partial phases begin at 6:33 UT and end at 10:01 UT. Moon will appear red-orange in color during totality (the Earth's shadow). Entire eclipse visible from North America, and eastern Pacific Ocean.
- 21 December solstice at 23:43 UT. The time when the Sun reaches the point farthest south of the celestial equator marking the start of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and summer in the Southern Hemisphere.
- 24 Moon near Beehive cluster M44 (morning sky) at 1h UT.
- 25 Moon at perigee (closest to Earth) at 12h UT (368,465 km; 32.7').
- 25 Moon near Regulus (morning sky) at 16h UT.
- 28 Last Quarter Moon at 4:18 UT.
- 29 Moon near Spica (morning sky) at 10h UT.
- 31 Moon near Venus at 15h UT (morning sky).

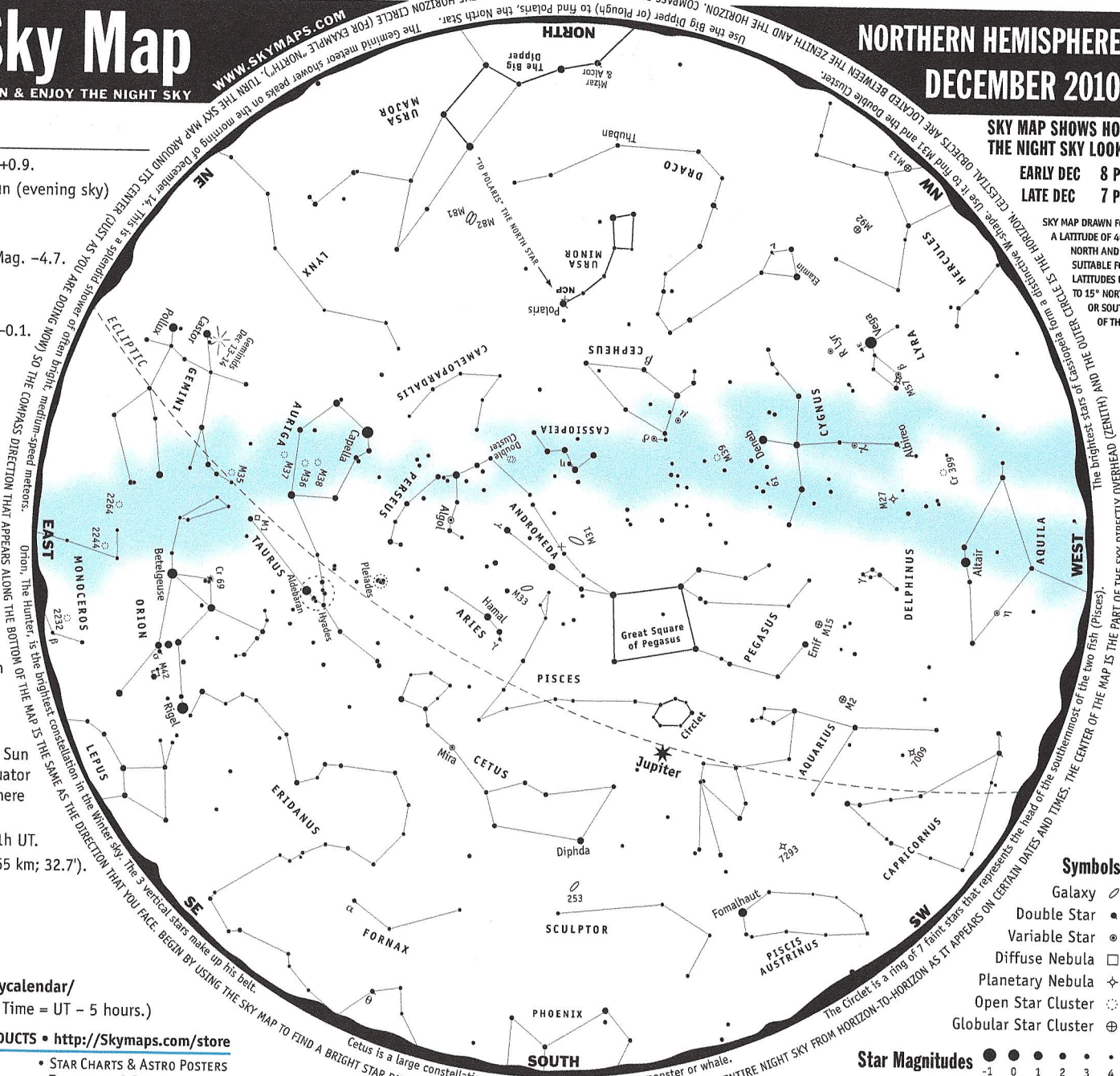
More sky events and links at <http://Skymaps.com/skycalendar/>

All times in Universal Time (UT). (USA Eastern Standard Time = UT - 5 hours.)



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 - TELESCOPES & BINOCULARS
- All sales support the production and free distribution of The Evening Sky Map.



SKY MAP SHOWS HOW THE NIGHT SKY LOOKS
EARLY DEC 8 PM
LATE DEC 7 PM

SKY MAP DRAWN FOR A LATITUDE OF 40° NORTH AND IS SUITABLE FOR LATITUDES UP TO 15° SOUTH OF THIS

- Symbols**
- Galaxy ☾
 - Double Star ●●
 - Variable Star ●○
 - Diffuse Nebula □
 - Planetary Nebula ◇
 - Open Star Cluster ○
 - Globular Star Cluster ⊕

Star Magnitudes ●●●●●
-1 0 1 2 3 4

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INSTRUCTIONS: THE SKY MAP SHOWS THE ENTIRE NIGHT SKY FROM HORIZON-TO-HORIZON AS IT APPEARS ON CERTAIN DATES AND TIMES.

Cetus is a large constellation that represents a mythical sea monster or whale.

