

UNA Planetarium Newsletter

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From your Editor

It was once written that a gentle meadow seen from afar deep down is a battlefield of life and death. Birds swoop down to grab unsuspecting insects. Plants battle one another for sparse soil and creatures newly born struggle to survive. But from afar it looks peaceful and tranquil.

In October we got a sudden reminder that the Universe can be both beautiful but dangerous. On Oct 6th came the announcement that a 9-foot long asteroid would collide with the Earth over the Sudan. We had less than 24 hours notice about this impact, stressing the need for an inventory of all such objects. It was a reminder that the Earth is a part of the cosmos and does not exist in isolation.

Mel Blake

Director UNA Planetarium and
Observatory.

Image of the Month

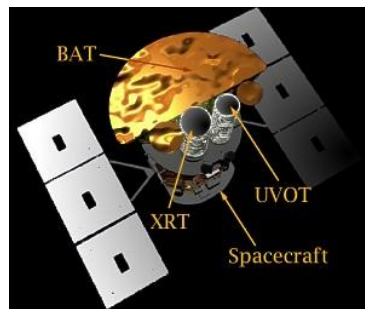


This image combines a Hubble Space Telescope optical image of the galaxy cluster Abell 1689 with a Chandra X-ray Observatory image of hot 100-million degree gas. The galaxies appear as yellow while the hot gas is shown as blue. Nearly every object you see on the image is a galaxy. The cluster is about 2.3-billion light years away and seems to show evidence of merging of two smaller galaxy clusters. The arcs seen in the image are from gravitational lensing of a background galaxy. **Image courtesy NASA/CXC/MIT/E.-H Peng et al; Optical: NASA/STScI/NASA.**

Astro Quote: Astronomy compels the soul to look upwards and leads us from this world to another. Plato.

Space Mission of the Month:

Swift. The Swift mission is dedicated to discovering the most energetic explosions in the Universe, Gamma-ray bursts. When massive stars end their energy generation, they have iron cores which require energy to fuse. This causes the star to destabilize and explode which forms a black hole. It releases more energy than an entire galaxy and creates all the elements heavier than Iron. Swift discovers about three of these a day! The bursts can also be seen optically, which we hope to do at UNA.



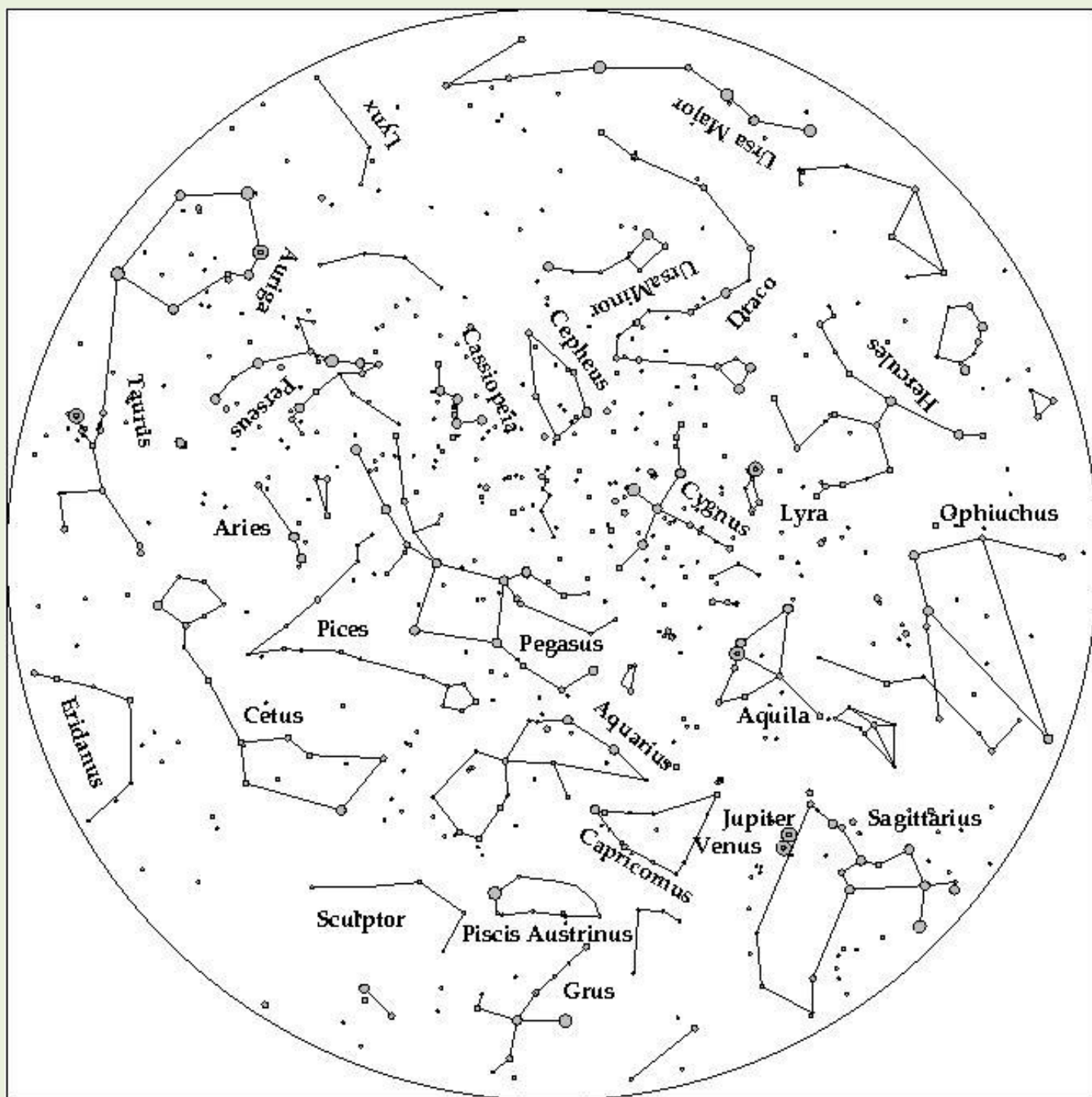
Observing

S. Taurid Meteors, Nov 4th.
N. Taurid Meteors. Nov. 11th.
Leonid Meteors. Nov. 17th
Jupiter near Venus at sunset. Nov. 30th.

Calendar for Nov. 2008

Nov. 4th..... **Planetarium Public Night**
Nov. 11th....**Planetarium Public Night**
Nov.14th...**Shuttle Endeavour launch. Public Night (depends on Shuttle schedule).**
Nov. 17th.... Leonid Meteors.
Nov. 18th.....Planetarium Public Night.
Nov. 20. Space station construction started in 1998.
Nov. 22th.....Family Galaxy Day.
Nov. 28thPlanetarium Public Night

The November 2008 Sky for North Alabama



How to use this Chart: The stars brightness's are represented by different sized dots. The faintest stars you can see are small dots, the brightest ones are large dots. Hold the chart with the direction you are facing down. So if you are facing north, hold the chart with north down. The circle represents the horizon and the center of the chart the point directly over your head. So an object half-way between the center and edge of the chart is half-way up in the sky. This chart was prepared using the SkyNow software of R. M. Blake. This chart may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes with the following acknowledgement included: Courtesy UNA Planetarium and Observatory. <http://www2.una.edu/planetarium/>.