Skylights

Newsletter of the Astronomical Society of Northern New England

JUN 2025

Skylights Editor:
Paul Kursewicz

Member of NASA's Night Sky Network

Astronomical League Member

ASNNE MISSION

ASNNE is an incorporated, non-profit, scientific and educational organization with three primary goals:

1) To have fun sharing our knowledge and interest with others.

2) To provide basic education in astronomy and related sciences to all who are interested.

3) To promote the science of Astronomy.

What's Up In June

By Bernie Reim

The month of June is named after the Roman goddess Juno, the god of marriage and childbirth and the wife of Jupiter, the king of the gods.

June always marks the beginning of summer for us in the northern hemisphere. This year that will happen Friday, June 20 10:42 p.m. EDT. That is the highest point that the sun will reach for the year. That will be about 68 degrees high in our sky at high noon, when the sun is on the meridian, a great circle which connects the pole stars. By contrast, it is only 24 degrees high in our sky on the winter solstice on December 21.

Try to get out under the warmer and hopefully drier skies this month to enjoy and appreciate the many celestial events always taking place above us and to attain a larger cosmic perspective of where we really are in space and how we and everything else is always changing and in constant motion from the subatomic scale right up to every single celestial object in the entire universe.

Several interesting highlights this month will include a close conjunction of Mercury and Jupiter low in the western evening sky during the first week this month before we lose Jupiter, good views of Mars in the evening sky, and Venus and Saturn in the morning sky. A bright asteroid named Vesta will be visible in Virgo all month with just a pair of binoculars and there will be a comet visible with a telescope moving east through Leo all this month at about 11th magnitude, or about 100 times fainter than any object visible without any optical aid. The slender waning crescent moon will pass just above Venus near the Pleaides open star cluster in Taurus one hour before sunrise on the morning of Sunday, June 22. To top off for this month that will be a minor meteor shower called the Bootids which will peak on Friday, June 27, one week after summer starts.

This will be your last chance to catch Jupiter as an evening planet for this year. Look for the king of the planets just below and to the left of Mercury very low in the evening sky in Gemini half an hour after sunset until June 8. Notice that Jupiter is about 7 times brighter than Mercury. Then Jupiter drops out only to reappear in the morning sky in late July. Meanwhile, Mercury continues to climb higher in our evening sky for the rest of this month.

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What's Up "*Continued from page 1*"

Mars continues to move rapidly eastward at the rate of one constellation per month, or about the same rate as we are orbiting the sun. The net result is that it appears to stay in about the same place in our evening sky and setting along with the constellation it is in at the time. Mars was in Gemini in April, Cancer in May and it will be in Leo all of this month. Look for a waxing crescent moon near Mars on the first of this month and then keep watching the red planet as it encounters Regulus, the brightest star in Leo and the 21st brightest star in the whole sky on June 16. The orange glow of Mars will nicely contrast with bluish-white hue of Regulus.

Regulus is about 80 light years away and has at least 4 component stars. The main star in Regulus is 4 times the mass of our sun and 300 times as bright. Remember that the photons of light that you see when you look at Regulus left that star about when WW 2 ended in September of 1945.

I actually saw Regulus in the daytime at high noon during the August 21, 2017 total solar eclipse that I saw in Driggs, Idaho near Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. Three or 4 planets also instantly appeared along with a few other stars as I stood deep inside the moon's shadow for a couple of minutes on that memorable Monday nearly 8 years ago.

The next planet to rise will be Saturn at around 2:30 am in Pisces the Fish. Through a telescope you will notice that its rings are now very thin, tilted at only 4 degrees. They had completely disappeared in March, but Saturn was in conjunction with the sun so no one could see it.

There will be a special rare event on the morning of June 16, 2 days after Flag Day. The shadow of its largest moon, Titan, will cross right over the planet at 5 am for several hours. Through a good telescope you can also see the shadow of Enceladus crossing over the face of Saturn this morning. Enceladus has a global liquid ocean under its icy crust, similar to the moon Europa around Jupiter. Plumes of water ice and vapor are constantly erupting from its south pole and forming a giant water vapor ring around Saturn. Complex organic molecules have been detected in these plumes, so there is a good chance there is something living in this ocean nearly a billion miles away.

The second-largest asteroid after Ceres will be visible in Virgo all this month. It will reach 6.1 magnitude and then fade to 6.7 by the end of June, so you will need at least a good pair of binoculars to see it. Vesta is 330 miles across, or about the size of Arizona. Ceres is 600 miles across, or about the size of Texas. The four largest asteroids in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, Ceres, Vesta, Pallas, and Juno make up half of the mass of the entire asteroid belt of over 1 million asteroids. About 6% of all the meteorites found on Earth come from the asteroid Vesta. Some of these carbonaceous chondrites contain dozens of amino acids and nucleotides which are the building blocks of life.

The last major highlight for this month will be a minor meteor shower which peaks on June 27. This is called the Bootid meteor shower and it will only produce about 3 meteors per hour from a dark sky site. That is just above the background rate of 1 to 2 meteors per hour from anywhere in the sky on any given night without any meteor showers. All of these meteors will originate from the constellation of Bootes the Herdsman near the Big Dipper. A good orientation technique in the sky is following the arc of the Big Dipper to Arcturus, the brightest star in Bootes and then

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What's Up "*Continued from page 2*"

speeding on to Spica, the brightest star in Virgo right below Bootes. These are the slowest-moving of all the meteor showers, hitting our upper atmosphere about 60 miles up at only 11 miles per second. The fastest ones come in at over 40 miles per second.

At least the moon will be close to new, so it will not interfere with any of these sparse meteors. It is always worth looking at the sky for a while even if no great meteor showers are expected as long as it is clear. These particular meteors are created by the earth passing through the debris trail of Comet 7P/Pons-Winnecke. This comet was discovered in 1819 in France and orbits the sun every 6 years and belongs to the Jupiter family of about 800 comets. The most famous of all comets, Halley's, orbits out to Neptune every 76 years. It will return once more in 2062.

June 1. The moon passes 1.4 degrees north of Mars this morning.

June 2. First quarter moon is at 11:41 p.m. EDT.

June 3. On this day in 1948 the 200-inch Hale Telescope at Mt. Palomar was dedicated.

June 4. On this day in the year 2000 the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory reentered our atmosphere. It was only up there along with the Hubble Space Telescope for 9 years, but it made many amazing amazing discoveries about the high-energy universe including about one enigmatic gamma ray burst per day that originated way outside of our own galaxy.

June 6. The moon passes half a degree south of Spica this morning.

June 8. Mercury passes 2 degrees north of Jupiter this evening.

June 10. The moon passes 0.3 degrees south of Antares this morning.

June 11. Full moon is at 3:44 a.m. EDT. This is also called the Rose or Strawberry moon.

to explain and use the electromagnetic fields that Michael Faraday, an English chemist and physicist discovered in 1831. Maxwell developed these equations in 1865 that led to all of the current technology in electrical engineering that enables us to use radio, TV, mobile phones, the internet, and GPS. Einstein build upon Maxwell's equations 50 years later when he developed the general theory of relativity in 1915. Einstein had high praise for Maxwell saying that one scientific epoch ended and a new one began with James Clerk Maxwell.

June 16. On this day in 1963 Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space and still holds the only solo spaceflight by a woman. Mars passes less than one degree north of Regulus in Leo at midnight.

June 18. The asteroid Vesta is stationary. On this day in 1983 Sally Ride became the first American woman in space. Last quarter moon is at 3:19 p.m. The moon passes 3 degrees north of Saturn tonight and 2 degrees north of Neptune.

June 20. The summer solstice is at 10:42 p.m.

June 24. Jupiter is in conjunction with the sun.

June 25. New moon is at 6:32 am.

June 27. The Bootid meteor shower peaks. The moon passes 3 degrees south of Mercury tonight.

June 29. George Ellery Hale was born on this day in 1868. He designed and developed the 4 largest telescopes in the world between 1898 and 1938 culminating in the 200 -inch Mt. Palomar which remained as the largest telescope in the world for 45 years after 1948 until 1993 when the twin 400 inch Keck telescopes were built on Mauna Kea in Hawaii. The moon passes 0.2 degrees north of Mars this evening.

June 30. On this day in 1908 an asteroid exploded about 5 miles above Tunguska, Siberia. The impact destroyed about 80 million trees over an area of about 1500 square miles, or the size of Rhode Island. No crater was ever found nor any large pieces of that asteroid. It hit with the force of 20 megatons, or 1000 times the power of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

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Moon Phases

June 2
First Quarter

June 11
Full

June 18
Last Quarter

June 25
New

Moon Data

June 1
Mars 1.4° south of Moon

June 7
Moon at apogee

June 14
Pluto 0.1° north of Moon

June 18
Saturn 3° south of Moon

Neptune 2° south of Moon

June 22
Venus 7° south of Moon

June 23
Moon at perigee

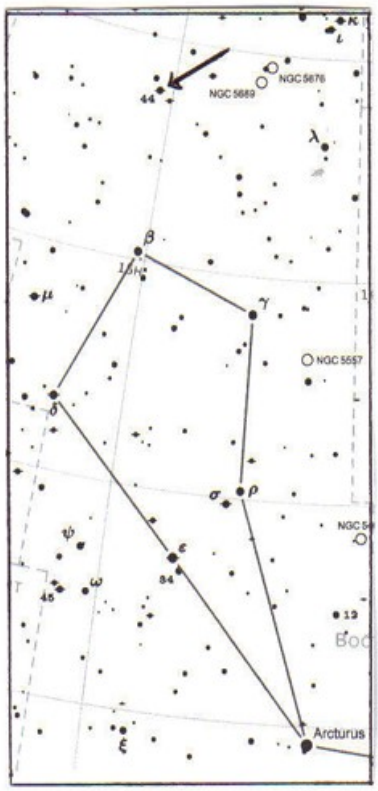
June 27
Mercury 3° south of Moon

EDITOR: *Dear reader, I want to let you know that Glenn Chaple will no longer be writing articles for the Observer's Challenge. He did a fantastic job over the many years writing articles each month for Skylights. I will personally miss them. So then, I want to give a big THANK YOU to Glenn for all of his time, and hard work spent writing those articles. His first article appeared in Skylights in June 2009. This June, would have been his 16th anniversary issue. But wait, why stop publishing his articles? I believe I have most of them saved. So, let me start with his first one, which was a one page only issue. Back then his article was called, "Sky Object of the Month." Later, he changed it to the, "Observer's Challenge." Enjoy these wonderful articles…see asterisk.*

Sky Object of the Month - June 2025 *

44 Bootis

By Glenn Chaple



Finder chart for 44 Bootis.
From Mag-7 Star Atlas
(Copyright Andrew L. Johnson)

Rule #1: Never write about a deep-space object you haven't seen.
Rule#2: Ignore Rule #1.

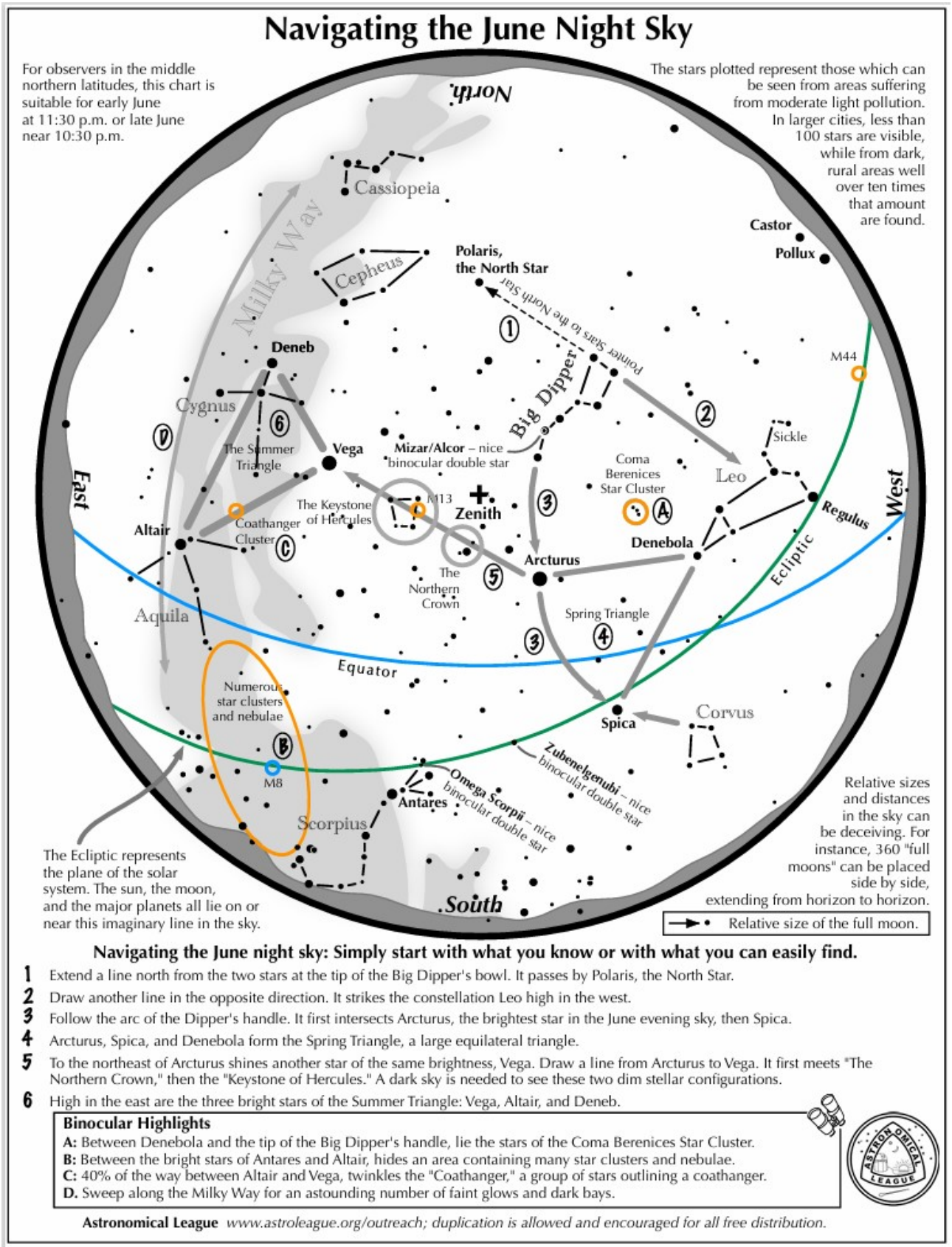
In the early 1970s, during my tenure as a "rookie" backyard astronomer, I observed double stars with relentless abandon. My instrument of choice at the time was a 3-inch f/10 reflecting telescope, made by Edmund Scientific. For a reference, I chose the 1966 edition of *Norton's Star Atlas*.

One evening, I decided to dine on double stars in the constellation Bootes. According to *Norton's*, one particular pair, 44 Bootis, had a separation of 2.6 seconds of arc – close, but not impossible in a 3-inch scope. To my surprise and disappointment, I couldn't split the pair – not that night or on subsequent evenings. Had I read *Norton's* more carefully, I would have seen a note describing 44 Bootis as a binary pair that was closing. I would later learn that its magnitude 5.3 and 6.2 components were separated by a mere 0.4 arc-seconds at the time of my futile attempts.

Fast forward four decades to the present. 44 Bootis, whose 210-year orbit is highly inclined to our line-of-sight, has opened up. Orbital data indicate that its component stars are separated by 2.2 arc-seconds. Time for a feast!

I haven't yet seen 44 Bootis, at least not double. But I'll be outside this month trying. Although a 2+ arc-second separation is within reach of a 3-inch, I'm going "loaded for bear." My instrument of choice this time will be a 5-inch f/12 Maksutov-Cassegrain telescope, paired with an eyepiece that magnifies at least 150X. To be safe, I'll conduct the observation on a night of above average seeing. Instead of my reporting what I ultimately see, check out 44 Bootis for yourself, and we'll compare notes.

* **NOTE: This June 2025 Sky Object of the Month was previously featured as the June 2009 issue.**



Navigating the June night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

1. Extend a line north from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes by Polaris, the North Star.
2. Draw another line in the opposite direction. It strikes the constellation Leo high in the west.
3. Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, the brightest star in the June evening sky, then Spica.
4. Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.
5. To the northeast of Arcturus shines another star of the same brightness, Vega. Draw a line from Arcturus to Vega. It first meets "The Northern Crown," then the "Keystone of Hercules." A dark sky is needed to see these two dim stellar configurations.
6. High in the east are the three bright stars of the Summer Triangle: Vega, Altair, and Deneb.

Binocular Highlights

A: Between Denebola and the tip of the Big Dipper's handle, lie the stars of the Coma Berenices Star Cluster.
B: Between the bright stars of Antares and Altair, hides an area containing many star clusters and nebulae.
C: 40% of the way between Altair and Vega, twinkles the "Coathanger," a group of stars outlining a coathanger.
D. Sweep along the Milky Way for an astounding number of faint glows and dark bays.

Principal Meteor Showers in 2025

January 4
Quadrantids

April 22
Lyrids

May 6
Eta Aquarids

July 30
Delta Aquarids

August 12
Perseids

October 9
Draconid

October 21
Orionids

November 9
Taurids

November 18
Leonids

November 26
Andromedids

December 14
Geminids

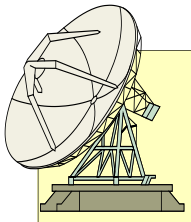
December 22
Ursids

Note: Dates are for maximum

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership fees are for the calendar year beginning in January and ending in December. Dues (see page 17 for prices) are payable to the treasurer during November for the upcoming year. New members who join during or after the month of July shall pay half the annual fee, for the balance of the year. Checks should be made payable to the Astronomical Society of Northern New England (A.S.N.N.E). If you would like to mail in your dues, use the form on page 17. Or you can use PayPal via asnne.astronomy@gmail.com

A Member who has not paid current dues by the January meeting will be dropped from membership, (essentially a two-month grace period.) Notice of this action shall be given to the Member by the Treasurer. Reinstatement shall be by payment of currently due dues.



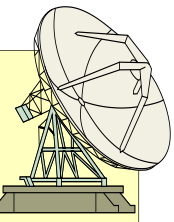
Got any News?

Skylights Welcomes Your Input.

Here are some suggestions:

Book reviews -- Items for sale -- New equipment --

Ramblings -- Star parties -- Observing -- Photos.



Our club has Merchandise for Sale at: https://www.cafepress.com/shop/ASNNE/products

All money raised goes to our operating fund.
Any design can be put on any item.

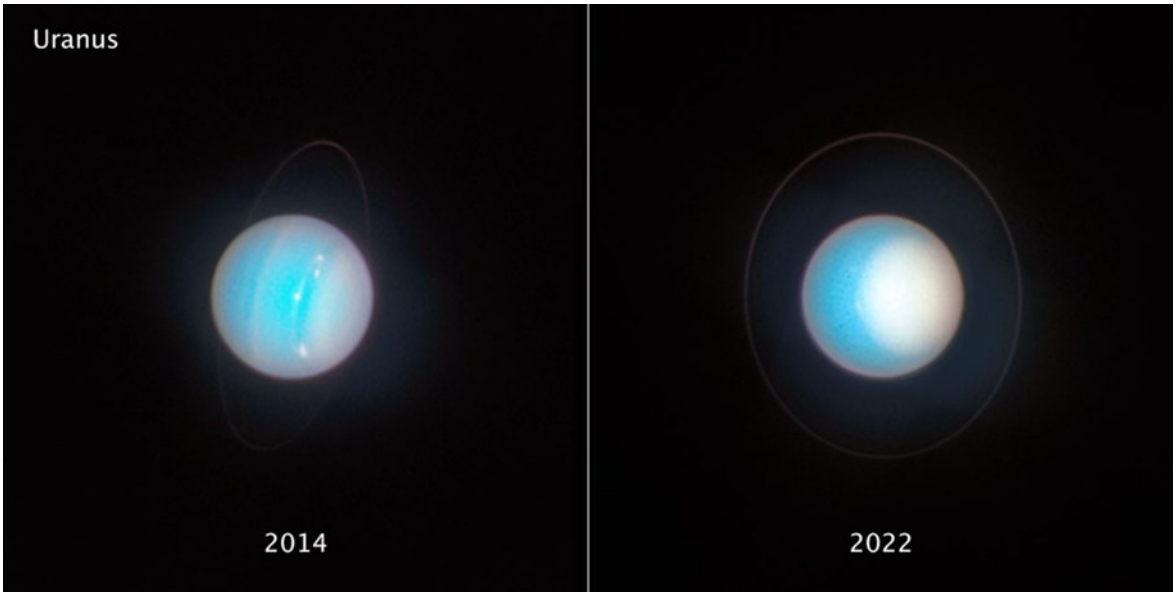
Contact David Bianchi dadsnorlax@yahoo.com for further details.

This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

The Night Sky Network program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.org to find local clubs, events, and more!

June's Night Sky Notes: Seasons of the Solar System

By: Kat Troche



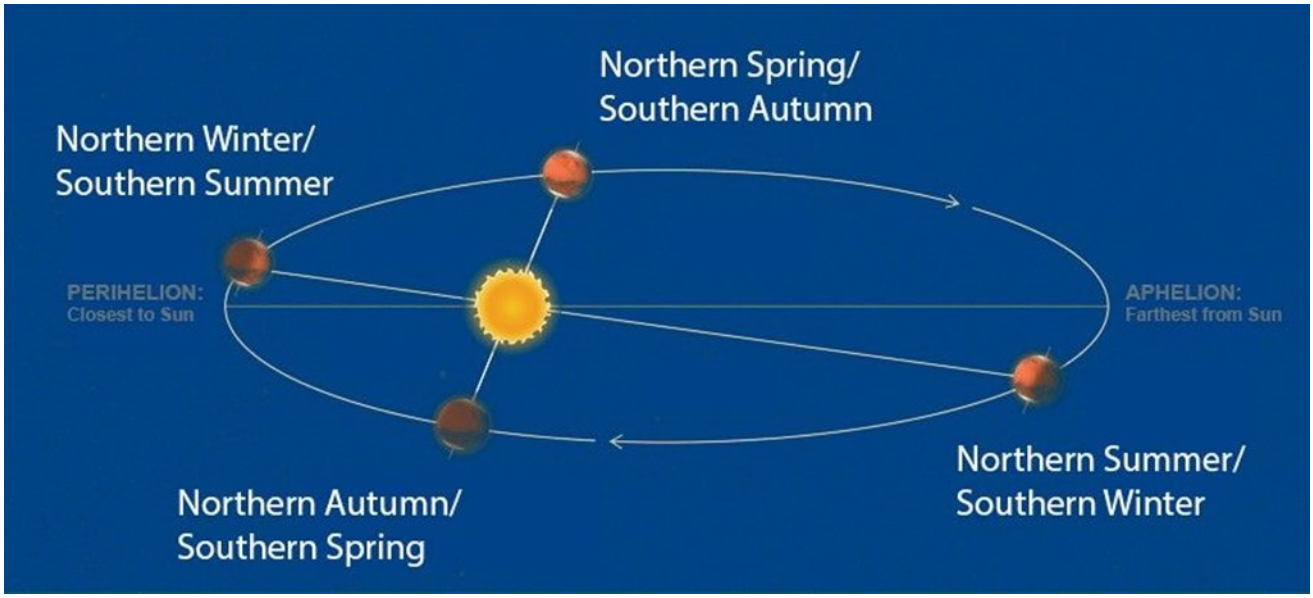
Uranus rolls on its side with an 84-year orbit and a tilt just 8° off its orbital plane. Its odd tilt may be from a lost moon or giant impacts. Each pole gets 42 years of sunlight or darkness. Voyager 2 saw the south pole lit; now Hubble sees the north pole facing the Sun. Credit: NASA, ESA, STScI, Amy Simon (NASA-GSFC), Michael Wong (UC Berkeley); Image Processing: Joseph DePasquale (STScI)

Here on Earth, we undergo a changing of seasons every three months. But what about the rest of the Solar System? What does a sunny day on Mars look like? How long would a winter on Neptune be? Let's take a tour of some other planets and ask ourselves what seasons might look like there.

"Continued on page 8"

Martian Autumn

Although Mars and Earth have nearly identical axial tilts, a year on Mars lasts 687 Earth days (nearly 2 Earth years) due to its average distance of 142 million miles from the Sun, making it late autumn on the red planet. This distance and a thin atmosphere make it less than perfect sweater weather. A recent weather report from Gale Crater boasted a high of -18 degrees



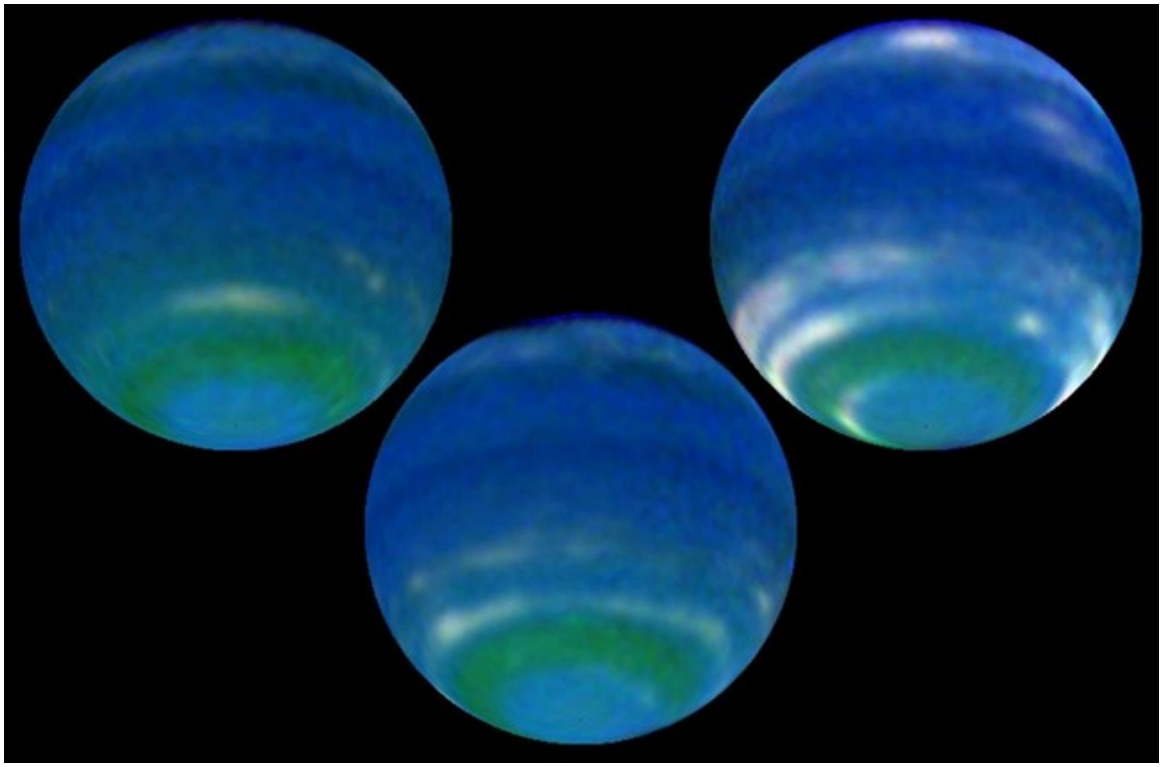
An artist's rendition of Mars' orbit around the Sun, and its seasons. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Seven Years of Summer

Saturn has a 27-degree tilt, very similar to the 25-degree tilt of Mars and the 23-degree tilt of Earth. But that is where the similarities end. With a 29-year orbit, a single season on the ringed planet lasts seven years. While we can't experience a Saturnian season, we can observe a ring plane crossing here on Earth instead. The most recent plane crossing took place in March 2025, allowing us to see Saturn's rings 'disappear' from view.

"Continued on page 9 "

A Lifetime of Spring



NASA Hubble Space Telescope observations in August 2002 show that Neptune's brightness has increased significantly since 1996. The rise is due to an increase in the amount of clouds observed in the planet's southern hemisphere. Credit: NASA, L. Sromovsky, and P. Fry (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Even further away from the Sun, each season on Neptune lasts over 40 years. Although changes are slower and less dramatic than on Earth, scientists have observed seasonal activity in Neptune's atmosphere. These images were taken between 1996 and 2002 with the Hubble Space Telescope, with brightness in the southern hemisphere indicating seasonal change.

As we welcome summer here on Earth, you can build a Suntrack model that helps demonstrate the path the Sun takes through the sky during the seasons. You can find even more fun activities and resources like this model on NASA's Wavelength and Energy activity.

Point and Shoot Camera Astro-Imaging (no telescope)

Canon PowerShot SX50 HS

Submitted By Paul Kursewicz

M67

RAW Mode, FL 1200mm, f/3.5, ISO 1200, 24 x 1min 30sec, 3-7-21

Re-edited on 5-29-25 with PixInsight

I took the leap and purchased a photo editing software called PixInsight. It's a different way to edit my photos than what I have been doing. So, a lot to learn. After watching several beginner tutorials, I noticed that peoples images were only showing white stars. Out of curiosity, I took one of my 2021 stacked images (un-processed) of M67 and brought it into PixInsight. Only using the Histogram and Curves functions, I was able to flesh out a whole host of colorful stars. When I compared it with my edited version made in Photoshop, this one gives a more vivid and rich look. M67 is an open cluster in the constellation Cancer, and is also known as the *King Cobra Cluster*. It's about 2,700 ly away and contains around a dozen bright orange K-type giant stars, as well as, around 200 to 500 stars spread over a apparent diameter of 30 arc minutes. Through my 12 x 36 binoculars it's small and faint. However, looking at M67 through my 4.5-inch refractor it's a beautiful object.

"Continued on page 11"

From the pages of "Burnham's Celestial Handbook" copyright 1978

M67 (King Cobra Cluster)

STAR CLUSTER M67. One of the most ancient known galactic clusters; photographed with the 13-inch telescope at Lowell Observatory.

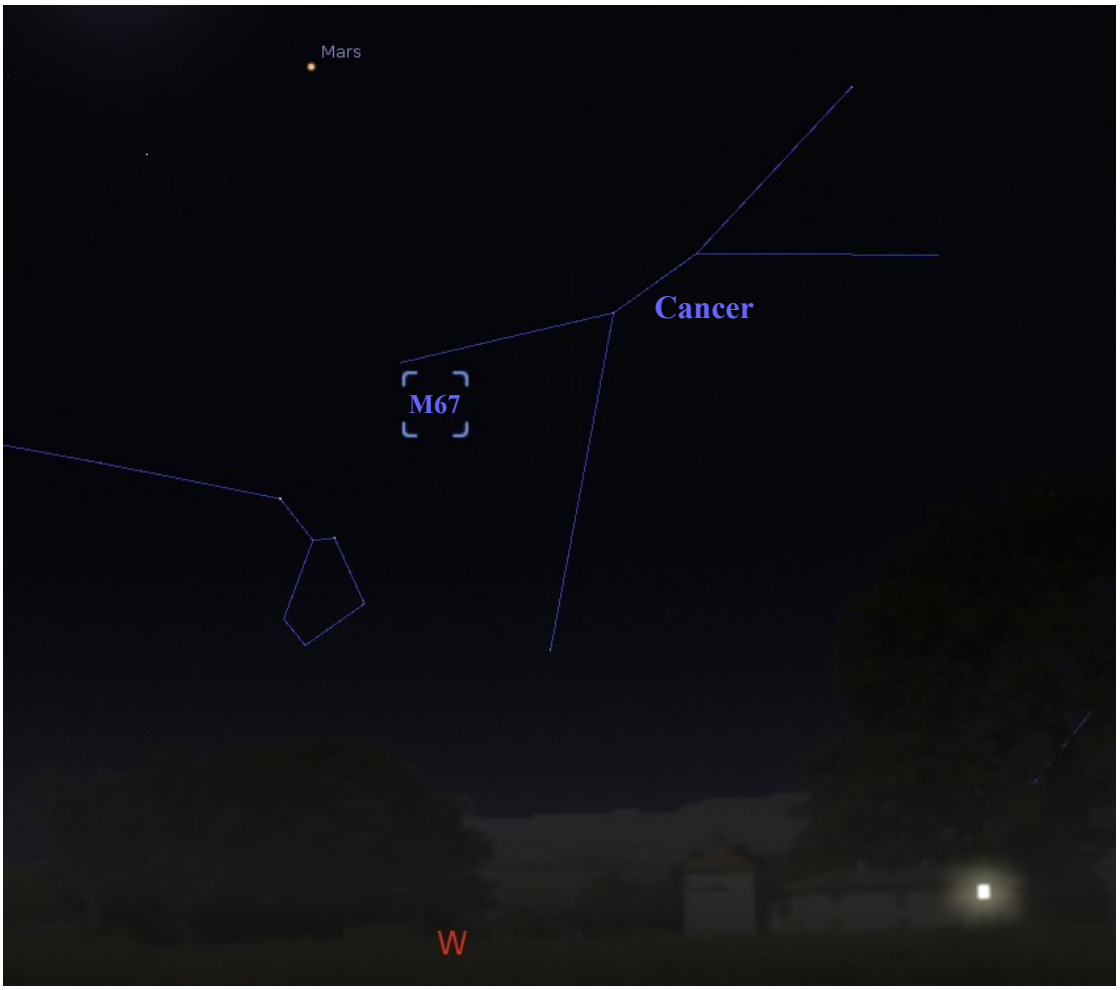
350

As the caption below the photo reads, M67 is one of the most ancient open clusters, about 4 billion years old. Open clusters like this are typically quite young. It's also unusual in its location, nearly 1,500 light-years above the plane of the Milky Way galaxy. Most open clusters are distributed along the central plane of the Milky Way.

"Continued on page 12"

Finder Chart

M67



Stellarium

I created this finder chart using Stellarium. On June 1st, at 10pm, M67 will be low in the western sky. The best time to view it would be in March (when I took my photo of it) where it sits high in the southern sky. The cluster contains about 100 stars that are similar to our Sun in composition and age, along with many red giant and white dwarf stars.

ASTRONOMICAL - PLANTS

In April my wife and I took a mini-vacation and on Easter Sunday spent most of our day at Longwood Gardens, located in Kennett Square, PA. It's one of the great indoor & outdoor Botanical gardens of the world. Some plants were labeled with astronomical names.

Two verities of EARTH-STAR. These plants were named for their star-shaped blooms.

Syngonium MOONSHINE has a soft, bright foliage that lights up any dull space providing an ethereal, dreamy appearance.

Club Meeting & Star Party Dates

Date	Subject	Location
June 6	**ASNNE Club Meeting:** **Business Meeting starts prior to Club meeting.** **Club Meeting (in house & on Zoom): 7:30-9:30PM** **Guest Speaker:** This month's guest speaker will be **Eric Levin**. Eric will talk about Cosmic Expansion — a *New Look* at the Hubble Constant and the Cosmic Microwave Background. **Bernie Reim** - "What's UP" **Astro Shorts:** (news, stories, jokes, reports, questions, photos, observations etc.)	**The New School, Kennebunk, Me.**
Last Month	**Last month members met at The New School and on Zoom. Our guest speaker was Dr. Thomas Moore and his presentation was about space weather. Bernie read his "What's Up" article. Astro shorts were shared.**	
June 27	**Club/Public Star Party: Weather permitting.** **Rain date June 28.**	**Talmage Observatory at Starfield West Kennebunk, Me.**

Directions to ASNNE event locations

Directions to The New School in Kennebunck [38 York Street (Rt1) Kennebunk, ME]

For directions to The New School you can use this link to the ASNNE NSN page and then click on "get directions" from the meeting location. Enter your starting location to generate a road map with complete directions. It works great. http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/club-view.cfm?Club_ID=137

Directions to Talmage Observatory at Starfield [Alewive Road, Kennebunk, ME]

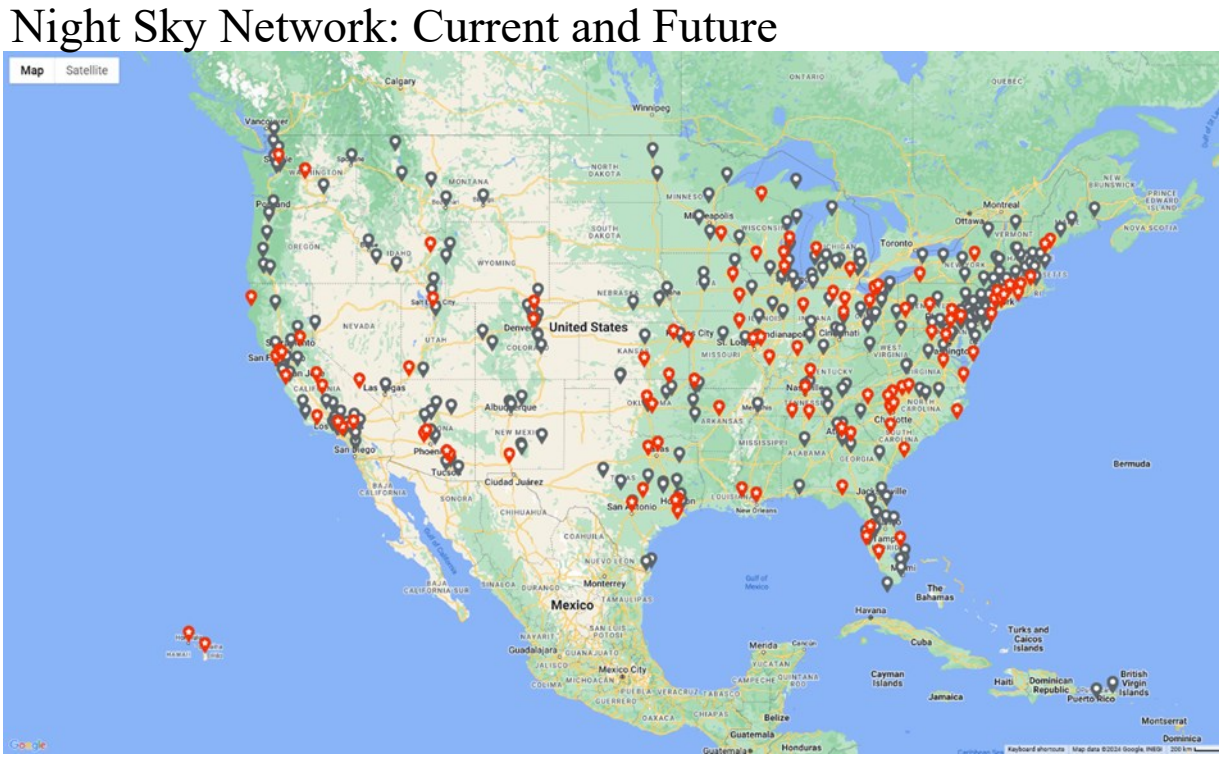
From North:
Get off turnpike at exit 32, (Biddeford) turn right on Rt 111. Go 5 miles and turn left on Rt 35. Go 2 miles on Rt 35 over Kennebunk River to very sharp 90 degree left turn. The entrance to the Starfield Observatory site is at the telephone pole at the beginning of the large field on the left. Look for the ASNNE sign on the pole.

From South:
Get off the turnpike at exit 25 in Kennebunk. After toll both turn right on Rt 35. Go up over the turnpike and immediately turn right on Rt 35. About 4 miles along you will crest a hill and see a large field on your right. Continue until you reach the end of the field. Turn right into the Starfield Observatory site at the last telephone pole along the field. Look for the ASNNE sign on the pole. If you come to a very sharp 90 degree right turn you have just passed the field.

NSN also hosts archived video trainings on these toolkits and other topics via its YouTube channel and a monthly webinar series with scientists from various institutions worldwide. Lastly, a monthly segment called *Night Sky Notes* is produced for clubs to share with their audiences via newsletters and mailing lists.

Sharing the Universe

In 2007, a National Science Foundation grant funded further research into astronomy club needs. From that came three club resources: the Growing Your Astronomy Club and Getting Started with Outreach video series, an updated website with a national calendar, and club and event coordination. Now, you can find hundreds of monthly events nationwide, including virtual events you can join from anywhere.

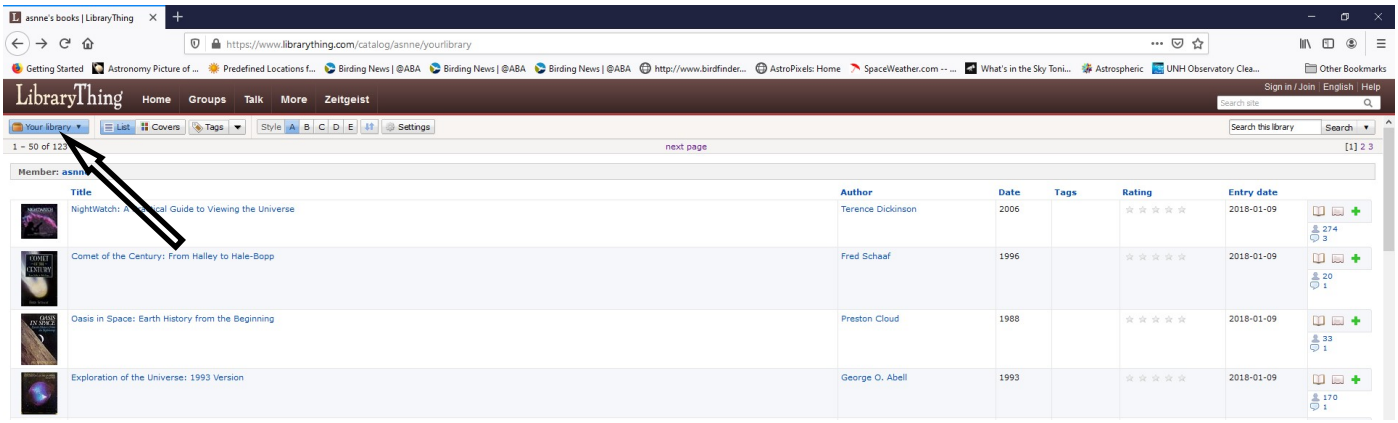


Map of Night Sky Network clubs within the United States as of November 2024

As of November 2024, NSN has over 400 clubs as far north as Washington State, west as Hawaii, and south as far as Puerto Rico. Astronomy clubs worldwide share the wonder of the day and night sky with their communities, and the Night Sky Network is happy to support US clubs with public engagement tools. Through their outreach efforts, member clubs have reached more than 7 million people to date, and the community is still going strong. Find an upcoming star party near you on our new public website.

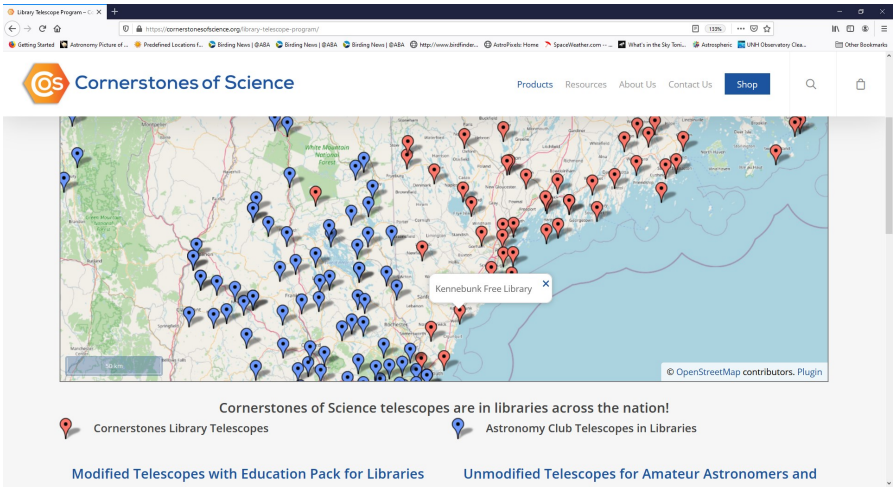
Astronomy Club & Library Resources

Our club has a library of astronomy books which are stored at The New School in Kennebunk, Maine (our monthly club meeting location). To request a book(s), contact one of the club officers. A listing of books is provided here: https://www.librarything.com/profile/asnne . After clicking on the link, a window will open. Click on "Your library" near the upper left corner (as shown by the arrow below). Then scroll down to the end of the page to go to the next page.



Would you like to borrow a telescope? While many astronomy clubs may have a scope to lend out, there are also many libraries which have telescopes for their guests to use. Here are a couple of links.

The following link will bring up an active map (see screen shot below) of the USA showing the libraries which have telescopes to lend out: https://cornerstonesofscience.org/library-telescope-program/



The below link will show a list of known participating library locations for the state of Maine.
https://www.librarytelescope.org/locations/usa/maine

To join **ASNNE**, please fill out the below membership form. *Checks should be made payable to: Astronomical Society of Northern New England (A.S.N.N.E).* For more details, please visit our website: **http://www.asnne.org**

Astronomical Society of Northern New England
P.O. Box 1338
Kennebunk, ME 04043-1338

2025 Membership Registration Form

(Print, fill out and mail to address above) or Use PayPal via asnne.astronomy@gmail.com

Name(s for family): _____

Address: _____
City/State: _____ Zip code: _____

Telephone # _____

E-mail: _____

Membership (check one):
Individual $50 _____ Family $ 60 _____ Student under 21 years of age $10 _____ Donation_____

Total Enclosed_____

Tell us about yourself:
1. Experience level: Beginner____ Some Experience ____ Advanced_____

2. Do you own any equipment? (Y/N) And if so, what types?

_____
3. Do you have any special interests in Astronomy?

_____
4. What do you hope to gain by joining ASNNE?

_____
5. How could ASNNE best help you pursue your interest in Astronomy?

_____
6. ASNNE's principal mission is public education. We hold many star parties for schools and the general public for which we need volunteers for a variety of tasks, from operating telescopes to registering guests to parking cars. Would you be interested in helping?
Yes_____ No_____

7. ASNNE maintains a members-only section of its web site for names, addresses and interests of members as a way for members to contact each other. Your information will not be used for any other purpose. Can we add your information to that portion of our web site?

Yes_____ No_____