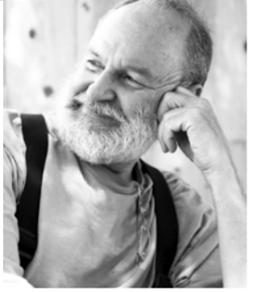


THE STARRY SIDE

New times they are a comin'

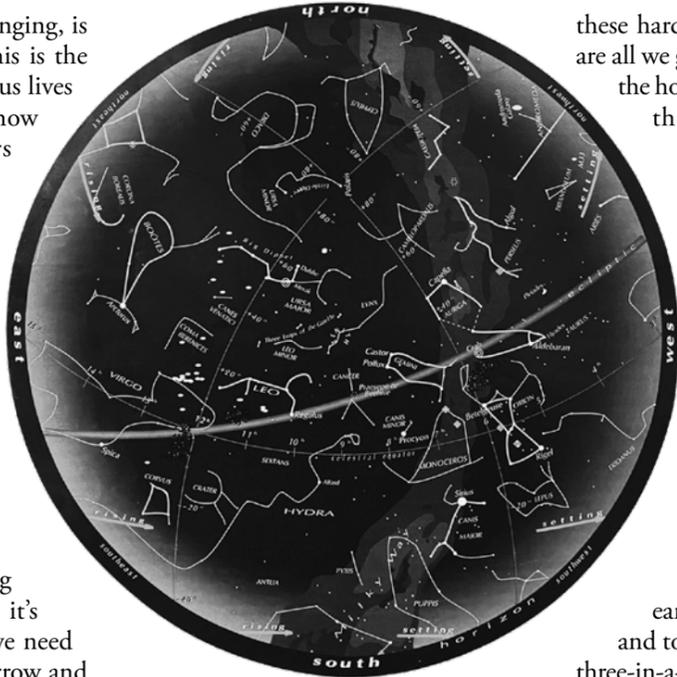
BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

Notice how everything is changing, is different, and is destructible. This is the universe we live in, and none of us lives forever. These times seem to show this up strongly. Astronomers have computed that even our steady, faithful moon is getting about a quarter of an inch further from us each year (as Edwin Hubble put it, it's receding at the speed of our fingernail growth), so eventually it's going to escape our pull of gravity and fly off!

Here on Earth the coronavirus has brought about enormous changes in our lives. Who knows how long it's going to last and what more damage it's going to do? So, in all of this, we need to not succumb to anger and sorrow and sadness and do the best we can to enjoy



Guy Ottewell's Astronomical Calendar

these hard and wonderful moments that are all we get. We need to pay attention to the horrible things we assumed weren't there but that are now loudly demanding change, asking us to make everything better than it was. Not back to what we called "normal" before, but to a new and greatly improved universe.

In the meantime, the skies give us the same reliable changes. At the new year you might have seen our brightest star, Sirius, due south and at his highest at midnight. Now, making his usual changes, he's on the way to that high point earlier in the evening. Just ahead and to the right of Sirius is Orion, his three-in-a-row belt so obvious. Next comes Taurus the Bull (the bright star Aldebaran

is sometimes called "the eye of Taurus"), and then the seven daughters of Atlas—the stars forming the snugly, little-teeny dipper shape of the Pleiades. These starry sights are all in a row along the southwest horizon line with Orion standing brave, tall, and upright.

Above Orion and towards the middle of the sky, you'll find Castor and Pollux, the twins, also standing completely upright. Almost at the zenith of the sky overhead is the wonderfully bright Capella in the constellation Auriga. Off behind us to the north, the Big Dipper is rising high in the easterly sky while always pointing faithfully to the North Star. Parallel with the Dipper and also rising is Leo the Lion, another stalwart of the spring, with its backwards question mark shape ending with a bright period: Regulus. Regulus is actually Leo's heart; above it is the curve of the lion's mane. It's all a truly beautiful winter's end delight.

Cassiopeia, the "W," is now down below Polaris, the North Star, in the west. My northern mountain will soon completely cover her. This is all so predictable and stable compared to all we've been through.

I must confess my joy at the results of our elections this year as I look forward to what we all can do together! May winter's end and the spring equinox bring new life and ideas and actions toward a better world unfolding.

Greeley Wells
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OF NOTE

Meteors

April 22, before dawn, the Lyrids create about 10 to 15 meteors per hour, the predicted peak of a shower stretching from April 16 to 25. The best time to watch may be the hour or two between moonset and dawn. The radiant for this shower is near the bright star Vega, which rises in the northeast at about 10 pm.

May 5, before dawn, is the predicted peak of the Eta Aquariids. Hopefully, the waning crescent moon won't too seriously dampen this year's production. The radiant comes over the eastern horizon at about 4am local time. In the southern half of the US there'll be 10 to 20 meteors per hour. Might not be so great for us northerners.

Planets

Mercury is low in dawn in March. It is not visible in April, when it has moved around the back side of the sun, and it is out of sight into dusk by May.

Venus doesn't appear at all for us this season, as it's behind the sun.

Mars is in each of our season's evenings. It's not as big as it was but is still its red self.

Saturn and Jupiter are visible in the morning through the season. (Jupiter is that brightest "star.")

Got News?

The *Applegater* welcomes submissions! We're your newspaper and want to share your news with readers throughout the Applegate Valley watershed's many neighborhoods. What's going on around you? Let us know! Send your writeup and photos to gater@applegater.org. Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*....

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