



March 2024 Astronomy Report



- **Moon:**
 - Phases

- **Planets:**
 - Morning planets
 - Venus, Mars & Saturn viewing window limited
 - Evening planets
 - Jupiter most visible planet this month
 - Mercury displays best evening appearance of year
 - Celebrate anniversary of Uranus discovery
 - Neptune reaches conjunction with the Sun on 17th, not visible

- **Comets/Asteroids:**
 - 12P / Pons-Brooks
 - Vesta

- **Dark Sky Star Party:**
 - Location - TBD, March 9

- **Public Viewing:**
 - Cub Lake, March 16

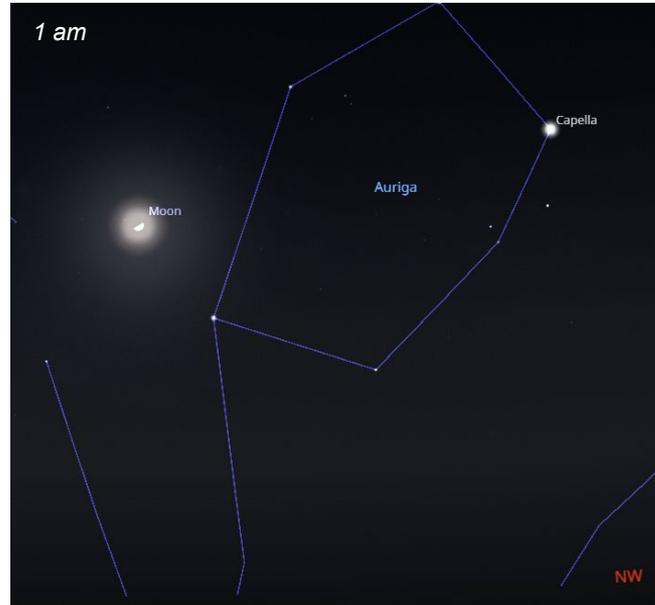
Moon - Phases

March 3 - Last Quarter (Scorpius)

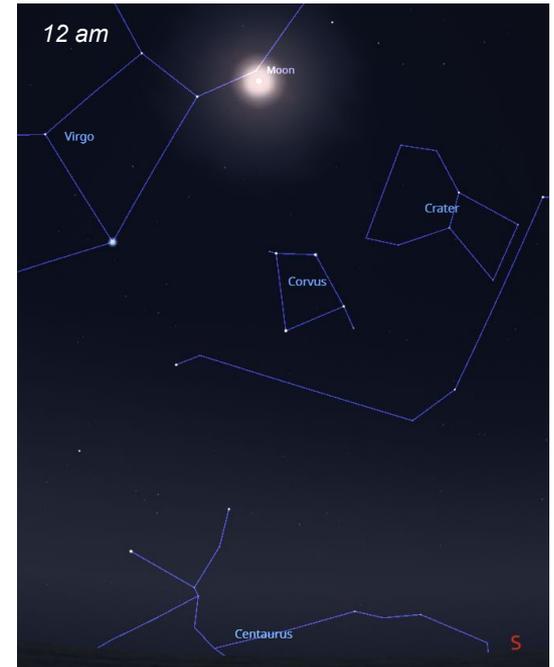


March 10 - New Moon

March 17 - First Quarter (Auriga)



March 25 - Full Moon (Virgo)



Apogee (252K miles) - 23rd
Perigee (222K miles) - 10th



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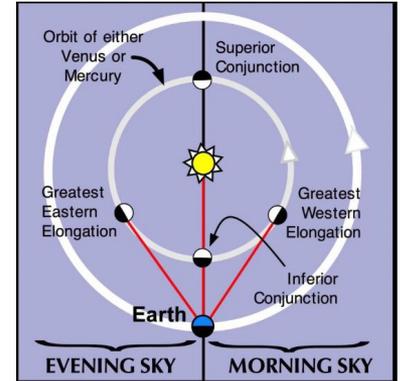


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Morning: Venus/Moon - (Capricornis)

Best opportunity to view Venus this month

March 7, 6 am



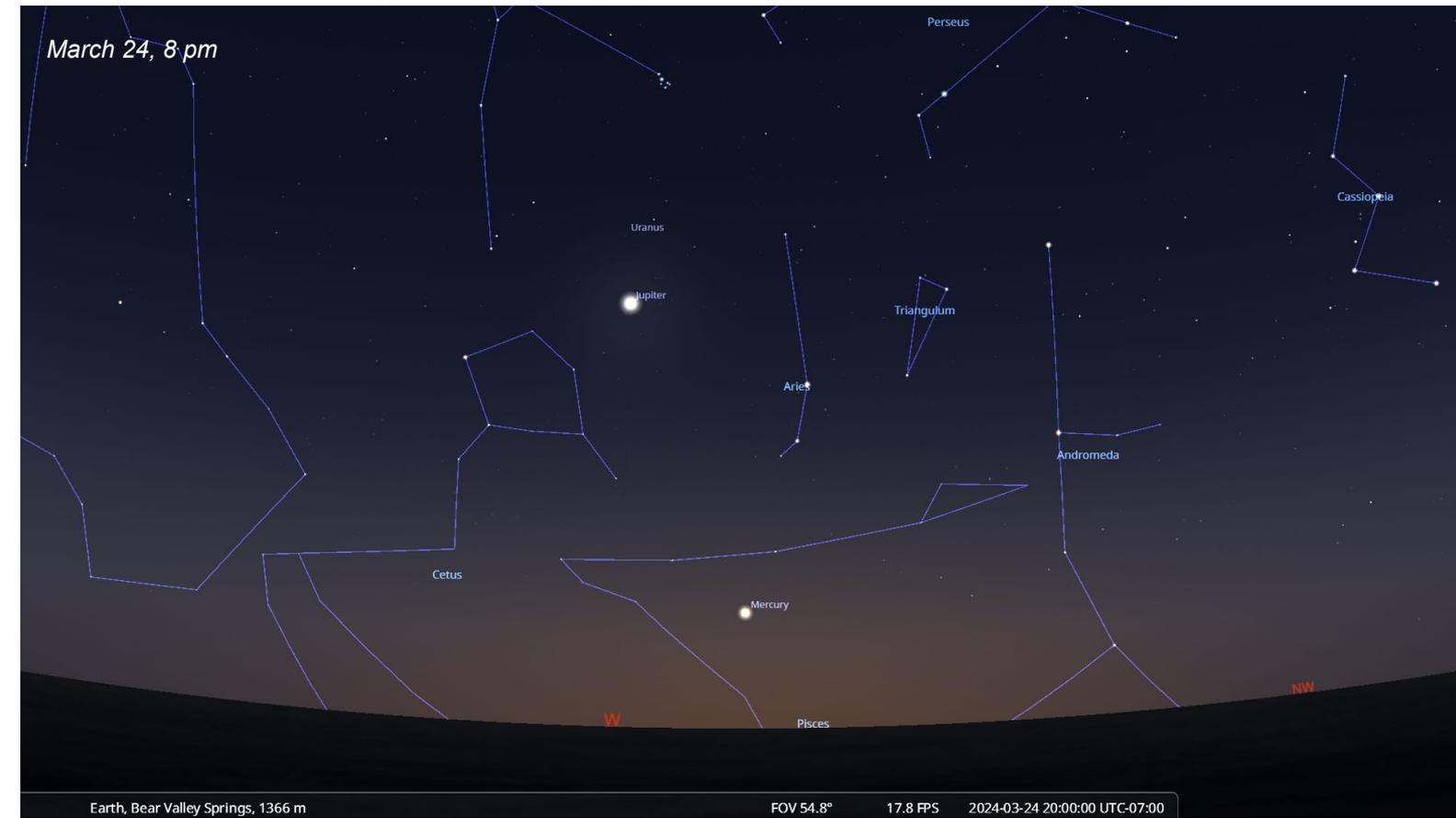
Morning: Mars/Saturn - (Aquarius)

Mars & Saturn are very low on the eastern horizon



Evening: Jupiter/Uranus/Mercury - (Aries, Pisces)

Jupiter most visible evening planet, will set by 10 pm by end of month
Mercury best evening appearance of year, greatest elongation from sun on 24th
Uranus will require binoculars



Evening: Uranus - (Aquarius)

Celebrate the anniversary of Uranus' discovery on March 13

8 pm

Uranus

Moon

Jupiter

Earth, Bear Valley Springs, 1366 m

FOV 6.87°

17.9 FPS

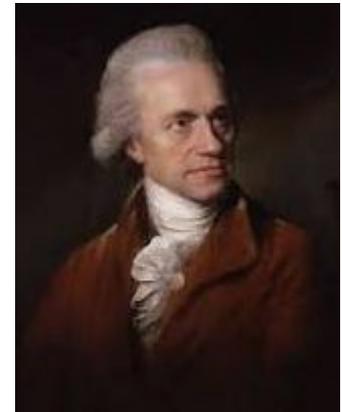
2024-03-13 20:00:00 UTC-07:00

Sir William Herschel first observed Uranus on **13 March 1781**, leading to its discovery as a planet, expanding the known boundaries of the Solar System for the first time in history and making Uranus the first planet classified as such with the aid of a telescope.



Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uranus>





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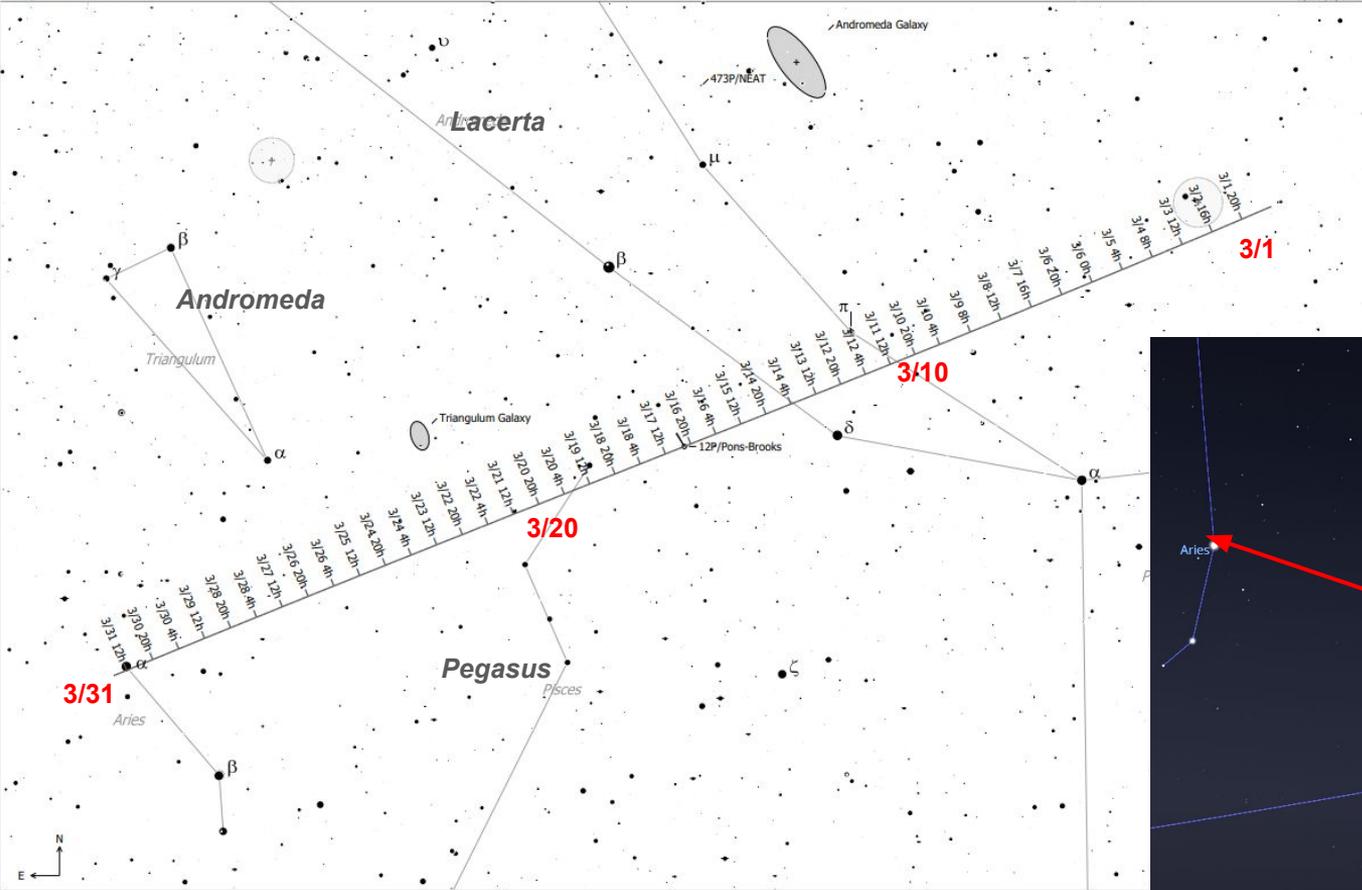
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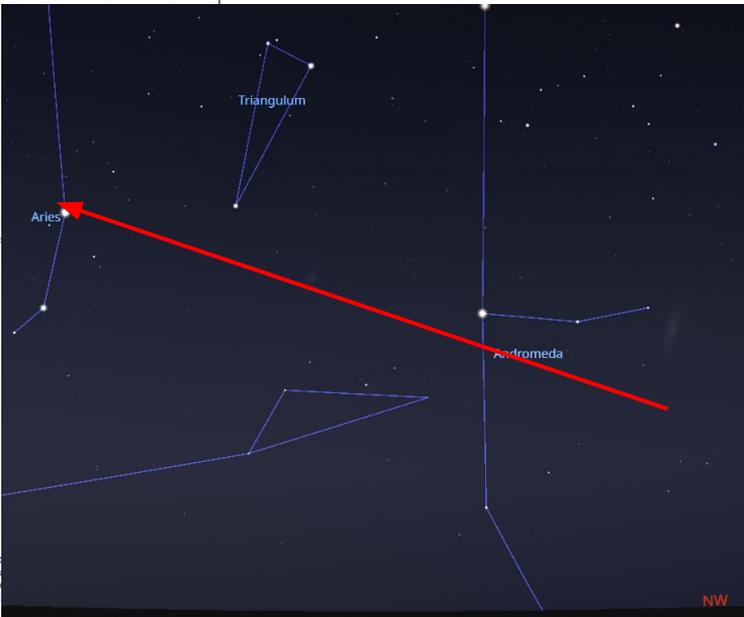
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Comet Search 12P/Pons-Brooks

12P/Pons-Brooks



Potentially easy binocular viewing, best with small telescopes; start search at twilight before it sets below horizon



12P/Pons-Brooks (Comet)
 Magnitude: 5.83 Coma Diameter: 7.8' SBr: 18.9 Mag/arcsec² Earth Distance: 1.6 AU

Source: cometchasing.skyhound.com

- Globular Cl.
- ◻ Ref. Neb.
- Qu.
- ◊ Dark Neb.
- Ple.
- Globule
- ◻ HI
- Open Cl.
- ◻ SN

Asteroid Search Vesta

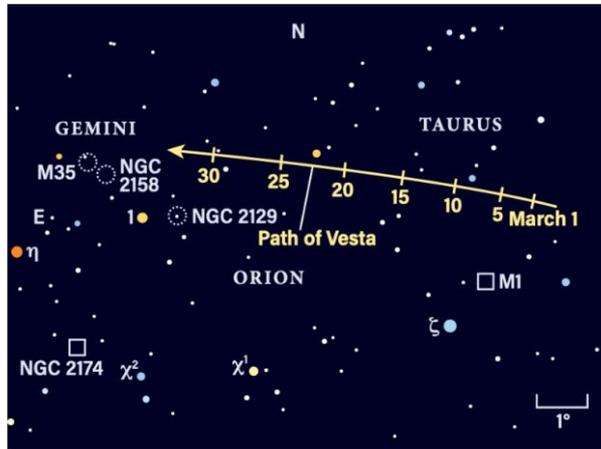
Locating Asteroids: From the city to galactic neighborhoods

Mild spring evenings are the best. 4 Vesta slides from the tip of Taurus' horn, Zeta (ζ) Tauri, to the splashy but thin star cluster NGC 2129 at the feet of Gemini. Though a half-magnitude fainter than last month, Vesta still shines at about 8th magnitude, brighter than the rich but faint star cloud in this arm of our Milky Way Galaxy.

Vesta is pretty easy in the smallest of scopes from the suburbs. On the 16th, you can slide 4° south of the First Quarter Moon to land on it.

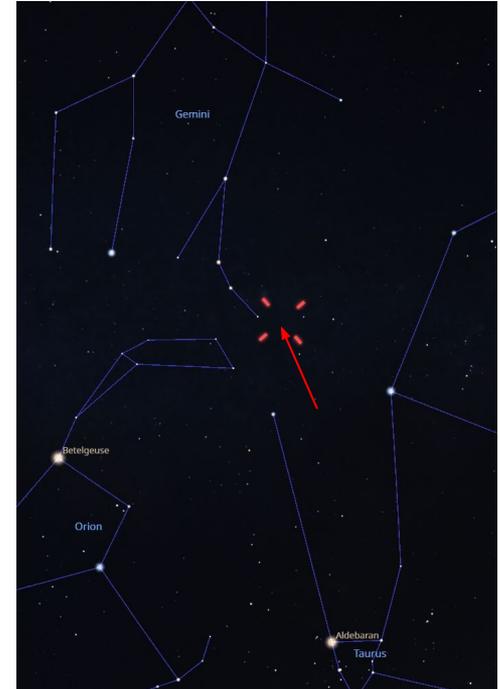
It only takes five dots of a pencil on paper and a couple of clear nights between the 13th and 16th, 21st and 23rd, or 29th and 31st to pick out the main-belt asteroid by its displacement. Next month it will appear to move fast enough to see it shift in a single observing session.

Discovered 217 years ago by Heinrich Olbers, Vesta is some 300 miles across, half the size of dwarf planet 1 Ceres. Olbers was looking for a "missing" planet between Mars and Jupiter, patiently comparing star charts to his eyepiece view.



Easy-to-spot Vesta is also easy to watch move from night to night this month, using this chart or a sketch of the sky. Credit: Astronomy: Roen Kelly

Source: [astronomy.com](https://www.astronomy.com)





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March Dark Sky Party Location TBD, March 9

Ps 19:2

1 - M44 (Beehive Cluster)



Open star cluster in Cancer
577 light years from Earth (binoculars, small scopes)
Only Pleiades closer to Earth in Messier catalog

2 - Intergalactic Wanderer



Very large globular cluster in Lynx constellation
300K light years from Earth (good conditions, small scopes)
Located in outer edge of Milky Way

3 - UFO Galaxy



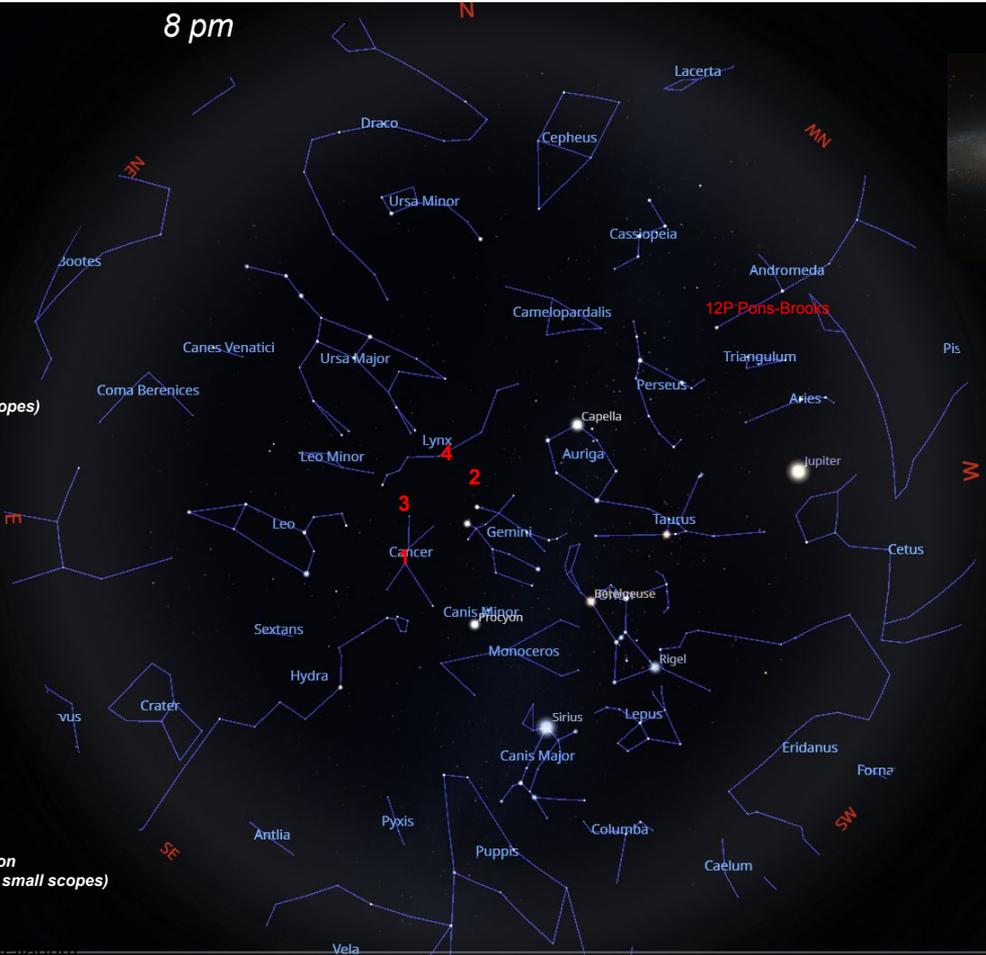
Spiral galaxy in Lynx, small scopes
30MM light years from Earth

4 - Bear Paw Galaxy



Blue compact dwarf galaxy in Lynx
29MM light years from Earth

8 pm





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March Public Viewing

Cub Lake, March 16

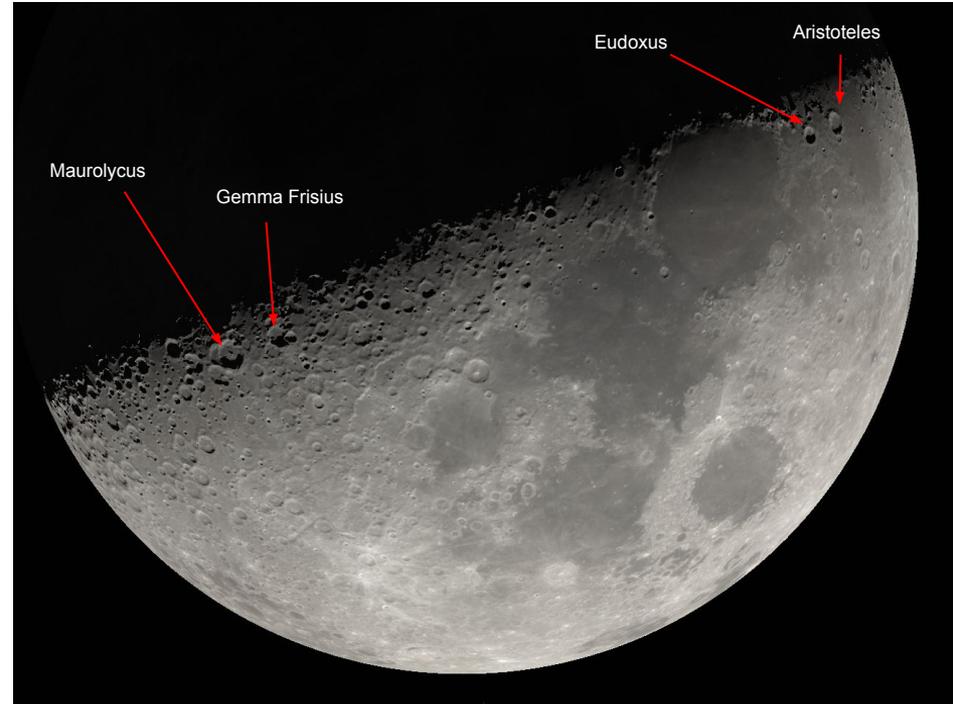
Sun sets ~7 pm

Ps 19:2

9 pm



First Quarter Moon



March Viewing Chronology

- 3 - Last quarter Moon
- 7 - Venus, Moon (6 am)
- 9 - Dark Sky Star Party
- 10 - New Moon (DST starts)
- 13 - Uranus anniversary of discovery (8 pm)
- 16 - Public Viewing, Cub Lake
- 17 - First quarter Moon
- 24 - Jupiter, Uranus, Mercury (8 pm)
- 25 - Full Moon
- 31 - Mars, Saturn (6 am)
- All month - 12P/Pons-Brooks comet, Vesta