Richland Astronomical Society
The Warren Rupp Observatory

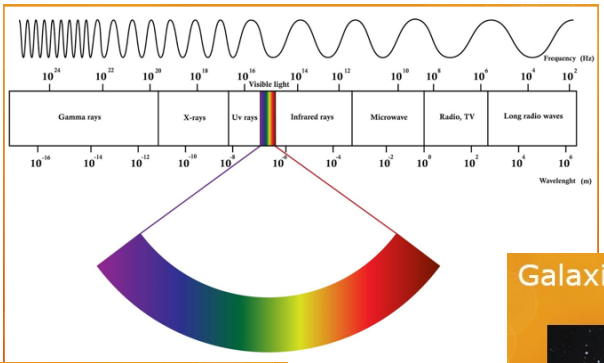
M111

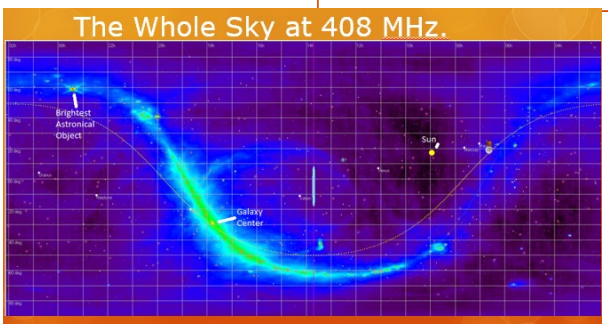
February 2026

The newsletter of the Richland Astronomical Society and Warren Rupp Observatory

Radio Astronomy presentation by Ed Harfmann January 3, 2026

Ed Harfmann of the Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers (SARA) joined the meeting via Zoom to make his presentation, Introduction to Radio Astronomy. Ed is a frequent attendee at Hidden Hollow.





The slides for his presentation are on the WRO website at:

PowerPoint File: https://wro.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Intro-to-RA-2026-RAS.pptx

PDF File: https://wro.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Intro-to-RA-2026-RAS.pdf

This is a link to a video of a similar presentation that Ed made last summer. Note that the audio is poor. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnZ5iUX39vQ

Jason A. Wallace

December 15, 1973 — January 9, 2026

Mount Gilead, Ohio

Jason Wallace, age 52, of Mount Gilead, Ohio, passed away on Friday, January 9, 2026, surrounded by his family—holding his hand and sharing their favorite memories.

Jason was born in Shelby, Ohio, and built a life rooted in love, curiosity, and unwavering devotion to his family. He was a devoted husband, a loving father and grandfather, and a cherished son. Above all else, Jason loved his family. In his free time, he could be found spending time with them or gazing at the night sky, searching for planets and galaxies. His passion for astronomy reflected his sense of wonder and adventurous spirit.

Jason was kind, sweet, and always up for an adventure. You could always hear him proudly talking about his daughters and grandchildren—the love he had for them was unwavering. He was the rock that held his family together, a constant source of strength, support, and love.

Jason is survived by his wife, Christy L. Wallace; his daughters, Christy A. Wallace, Brittany (Jared) Robinson, and Melissa (Cameron) Hoffman; his mother, Linda Wallace; his sister, Jewell Lynn Wallace; and his beloved grandchildren, Brayli Williams, Bryla Williams, Malia Robinson, Jayda Robinson, Camille Hoffman, and Rudy Hoffman.

He was preceded in death by his father, David P. Wallace; his sister, Tamar Wallace; and his brothers, David “Boe” Wallace, Nathan Wallace, and Jeremy Wallace.

Jason made it clear he never wanted a funeral. In honoring his wishes, a celebration of life will be held at the astronomy club at a later date. Details will be shared when available.

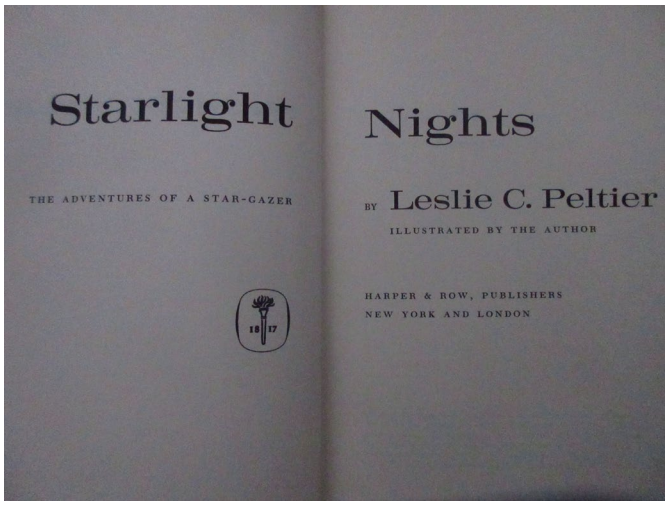
Forever our guiding star, forever our dad and papa.

My Appreciation of the Book Starlight Nights -By Mitch Luman

How many of you have heard of the book *Starlight Nights: Adventures of a Stargazer*, by Leslie C. Peltier?

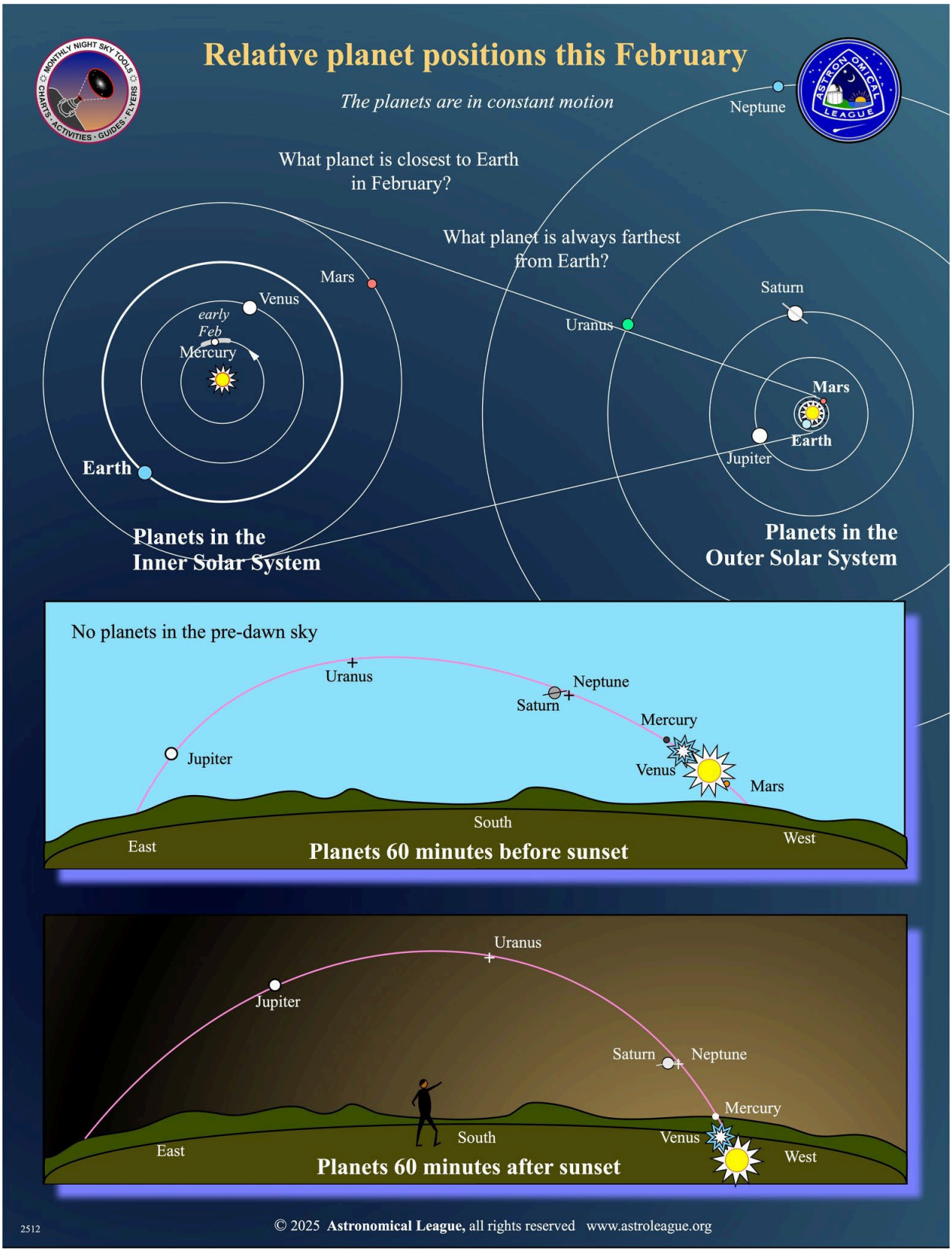
Hundreds of people, if not thousands, have been inspired by this 1965 book written by one of history's most prolific amateur astronomers. Peltier grew up in Delphos, Ohio, which provided evidence also to me growing up in Ohio that astronomy—clouds and all—could be practiced in Ohio!

I first became aware of this book while in high school. The book tells the inspiring story of amateur stargazer Leslie Peltier and his lifelong love affair with astronomy. It has always been my favorite autobiographical astronomy book. Around this same time, an adult friend of mine (we both were members of the local astronomical society) visited Peltier at his observatory in Delphos. He came back with several signed 8×10-inch signed photographs of Peltier at his observatory, and gave one to me!



While an adult living in Indiana, I noticed a copy of *Starlight Nights* at my local library. I checked it out and reread it several times. Often disposing of older books at its annual book sale, I watched for the book to come up for sale for many years. It never did. The library director was an acquaintance of mine and I mentioned to her that if *Starlight Nights* ever came up for sale to let me know. Knowing my interest in astronomy, one year, prior to sending it to the book sale, she gifted it to me.

Starlight Nights has been out of print for many years, but copies of the book can often be found on the websites of online used booksellers. If your local library belongs to the CLEVNET library consortium, a copy is available for loan from the Cleveland Public Library.


Relative planet positions this February
The planets are in constant motion
What planet is closest to Earth in February?
What planet is always farthest from Earth?
Neptune
Mars
Venus
early Feb
Mercury
Earth
Uranus
Saturn
Mars
Earth
Jupiter
Planets in the Inner Solar System
Planets in the Outer Solar System
No planets in the pre-dawn sky
Uranus
Neptune
Saturn
Mercury
Jupiter
Venus
Mars
East
South
West
Planets 60 minutes before sunset
Uranus
Jupiter
Saturn
Neptune
Mercury
East
South
Venus
West
Planets 60 minutes after sunset
2512
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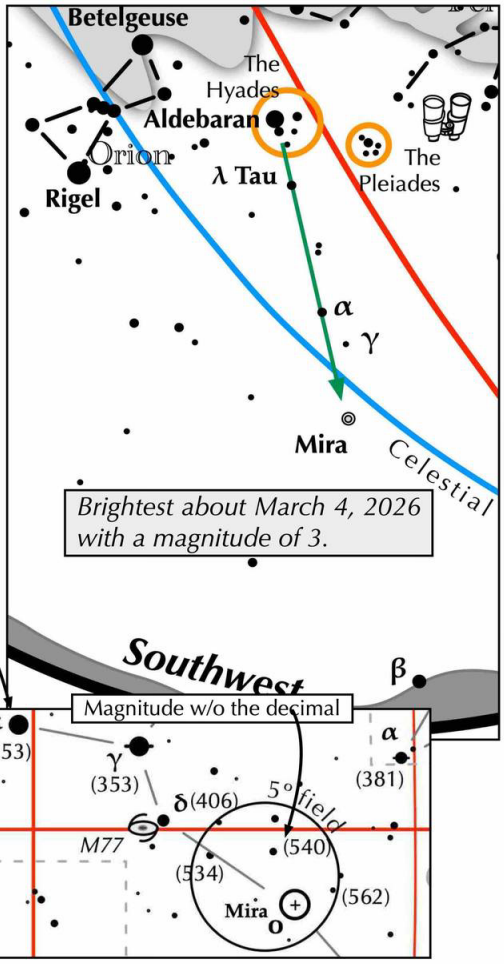
Nearing its maximum

Mira – Omicron Ceti

Every 330 days, this star reaches maximum brightness and is visible to the unaided eye – but only for 3 to 4 months.

Where is Mira in the sky?

- On January and February evenings about 2 hours after sunset, look to the southwest. Locate the bright star Aldebaran.
- Draw a line from Aldebaran extending to the west-southwest.
- It first passes the 3.4 magnitude Lambda Tauri, then 2.5 magnitude Alpha Ceti.
- Continue it another 50% of the Aldebaran - Alpha Ceti distance.
- The line ends at Omicron Ceti.



Your Observing Activity

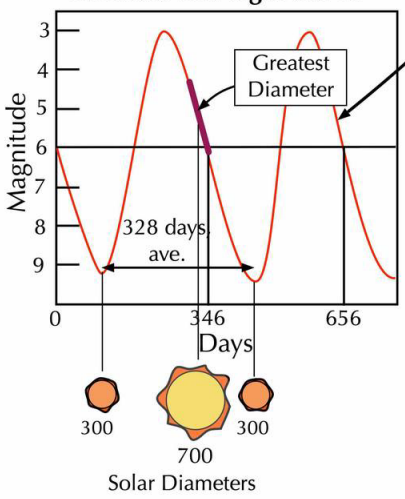
Recording your observations

A. Record date and time.

B. Estimate Mira's magnitude by interpolating between the magnitudes of nearby stars.

C. Plot the brightness vs. decimal days.

Omicron Ceti Light Curve



Examine the Omicron Ceti reports at AAVSO:
https://apps.aavso.org/webobs/results/?star=Omicron+Ceti&start=2020-01-01&end=2026-01-05&num_results=25&obs_types=all&page=1

What You are Seeing

- The star pulsates with its diameter ranging between 300 and 700 solar diameters.
- The pulsation is believed to be caused by inconsistent fusion alternating between shells of helium and hydrogen.
- Reddest coloration occurs near minimum brightness around 9th magnitude.
- Period is about 330 days. Every year, its maximum advances 1 month. The cycle doesn't exactly repeat.

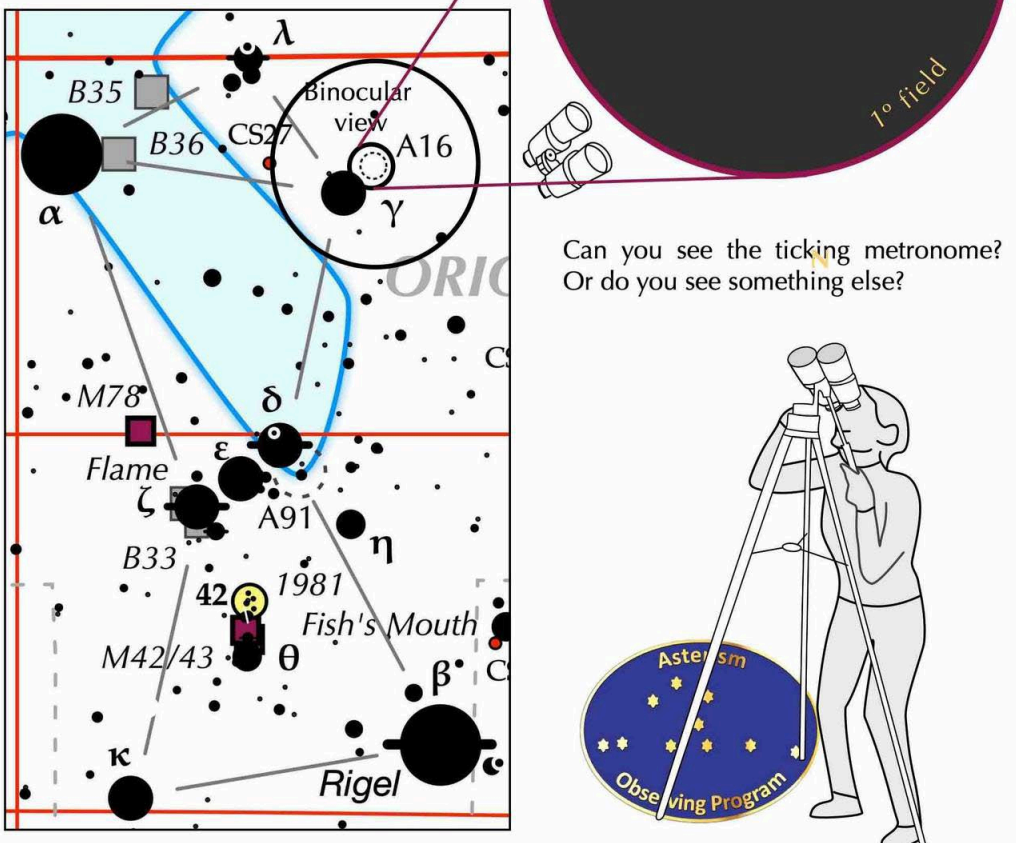
2601

Metronome: a fun asterism for binoculars and telescopes

16 on the Astronomical League's Asterism list

How to find ...

1. Find Orion and its right shoulder star Gamma Orionis, aka Bellatrix, a 1.6 magnitude star.
2. The asterism is 1° northwest of Bellatrix.
3. Look carefully for the asterism's six stars ranging in magnitude 7.4 to 8.5.



Can you see the ticking metronome? Or do you see something else?

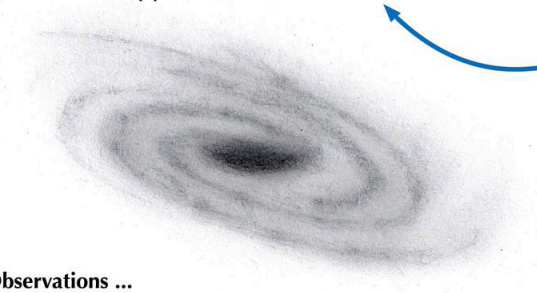
Citizen Science Programs

through the Astronomical League

The Astronomical League believes that the role that citizens can play in furthering scientific knowledge is significant. Many organizations have developed opportunities for each of us to contribute and the Astronomical League wants to encourage everyone to take advantages of this. **There is indeed something for everyone regardless of their expertise or experience.**

Level 1 : Projects requiring only passive participation.
These projects need help analyzing vast quantities of data. Typically they would use your computer when it is not actively doing work for you. They analyze packets of data and report their findings to the group doing the research. **Examples include: SETI@Home and Einstein@Home.**

Level 2 : Projects requiring active participation without direct observations.
Many projects need your eyes and brain to help analyze vast amounts of data. They often involve the categorization of objects. The list changes frequently as new opportunities arise and as older opportunities retire.



Just a few examples from many
- Aurorasaurus
- Radio Galaxy Zoo
- Exoplanet Explorer
- Planet Hunters
- Galaxy Zoo
- Gravitational Lenses
- Stardust
- Planets 4 – Ridges
- CosmoQuest Mars Mapper
- Fireballs in the Sky
- Active Asteroids
- CosmoQuest Moon Mapper
- Solar Stormwatch II
- Sun Spotter
- Supernova Hunters

Direct Observations ...
- Active Galactic Nuclei – Variable Galaxies
- Binocular Variable Star Observing Program
- Earth Orbiting Satellite Observing Program
- Mars Observing Program
- Meteor Observing Program
- Nova Observing Program
- Occultation Observing Program
- Spectroscope Observing Program
- Target NEO Observing Program
- Variable Star Observing Program

Level 3: Projects requiring direct observations.
These projects require the participants to make observations, perform some preliminary analysis, and to submit their results to a national or international database. New ones will be offered as new opportunities are identified. We hope you will try some of these Observing programs as your observational prowess develops.

For complete details ...

https://www.astroleague.org/citizen-science-special-program/

"37" Cluster, NGC 2169
an asterism for small telescopes

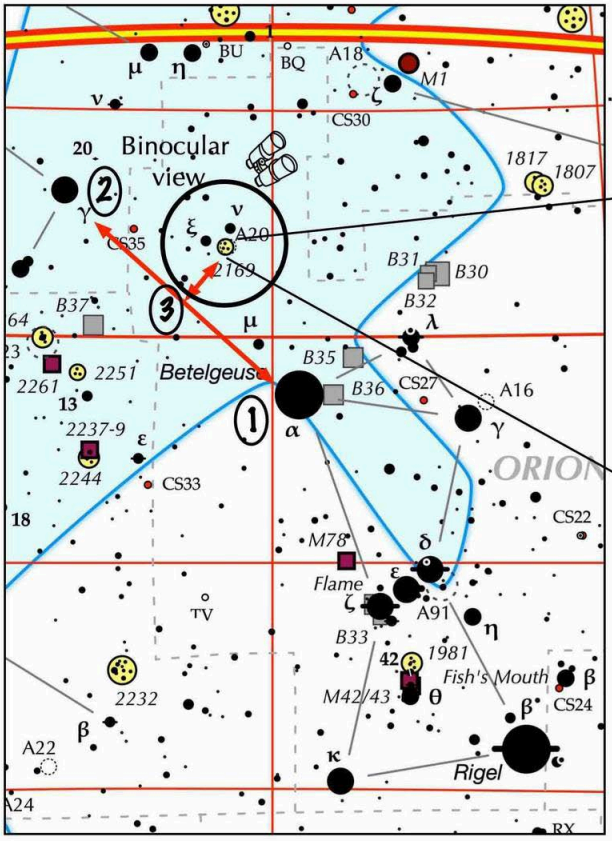
On both the Astronomical League's Asterism list and Herschel 400 list

How to find ...

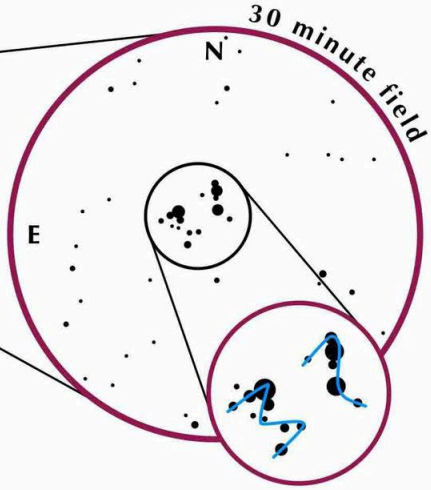
1. Find Orion and its bright star Betelgeuse.
2. Locate Gamma Geminorum, an easily seen 1.9 magnitude star at the foot of Gemini.
3. Draw a line connecting those two stars.
4. At the line's mid point, draw another line perpendicular to it extending northwest. The line's length is 1/4 that of the first line.
5. It ends near Xi and Nu Orionis, two 4.4 magnitude stars. Aim the finderscope (or binoculars) at them.
6. NGC 2169 forms the southwestern vertex of a right triangle with Xi and Nu.
7. Use moderate to low magnification, one that gives a field of 30-40 minutes.
8. The cluster's stars have magnitudes ranging from 7 through 11.

Can you see the "37"? Or do you see something else?

- Remember, in an SCT or refractor using a diagonal, the image will be mirrored.
- A rotated field will depict an "LE" instead of a "37."



This cluster is thought to be 3600 light-years distant, and may actually consist of two neighboring clusters.



11th Anniversary!

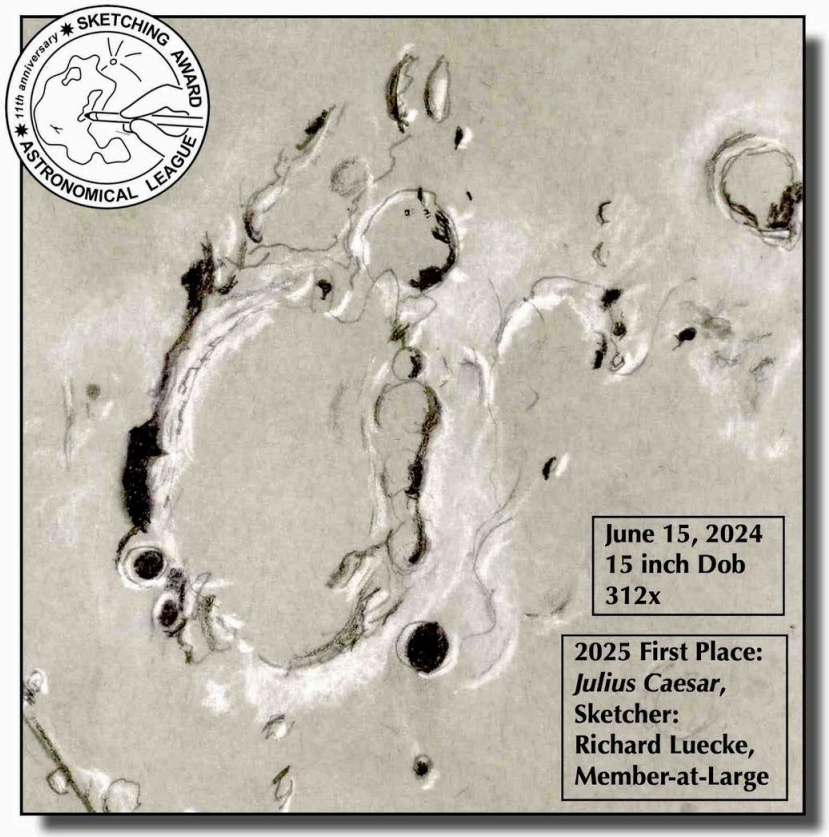
2026 Astronomical League Sketching Award Competition

Do you have an astronomical themed sketch that you'd like to share with others?
The deadline is approaching to submit entrees into the
2026 AL Sketching Award competition.

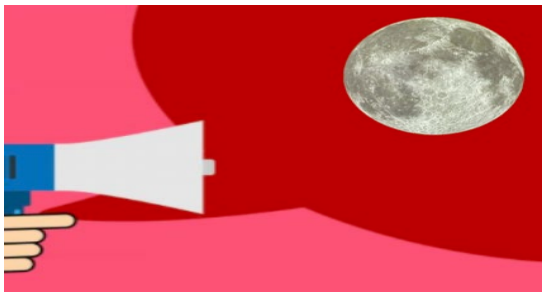
Deadline: March 31

For complete information:
https://www.astroleague.org/astronomical-league-awards/

Submit entries to: Sketch@astroleague.org



Remember: Deadline for entry: March 31



A Call for Programs - By Mitch Luman

RAS members contributed some memorable programs in 2025. We need more in 2026. Who could forget Phil Hoyle's informative program on the astronomical events of the year ahead, Alex McCarthy's expertly researched presentation on the history of the space race, Rich Krahling's astronomical league program, or Mark Vanderaar's update on gravitational wave astronomy? Roughly half of our monthly programs are presented by members. If you have a program you might be willing to share at one of our upcoming 2026 meetings, shoot me your idea. Contact me at starsoverohio@gmail.com.