

April 2007

10:00 p.m. on April 1

9:00 p.m. on April 15

8:00 p.m. on May 1

To use this chart: hold the chart in front of you and turn it so the direction you are facing is at the bottom of the chart.

- **Bright Stars**
- **Medium Bright Stars**
- **Faint Stars**

Scan the sky with binoculars: the darker the sky, the better.

• **Open Star Clusters:**

M-44 - The Beehive

M-45 - The Pleiades

Coma Berenices is a star cluster and a constellation.

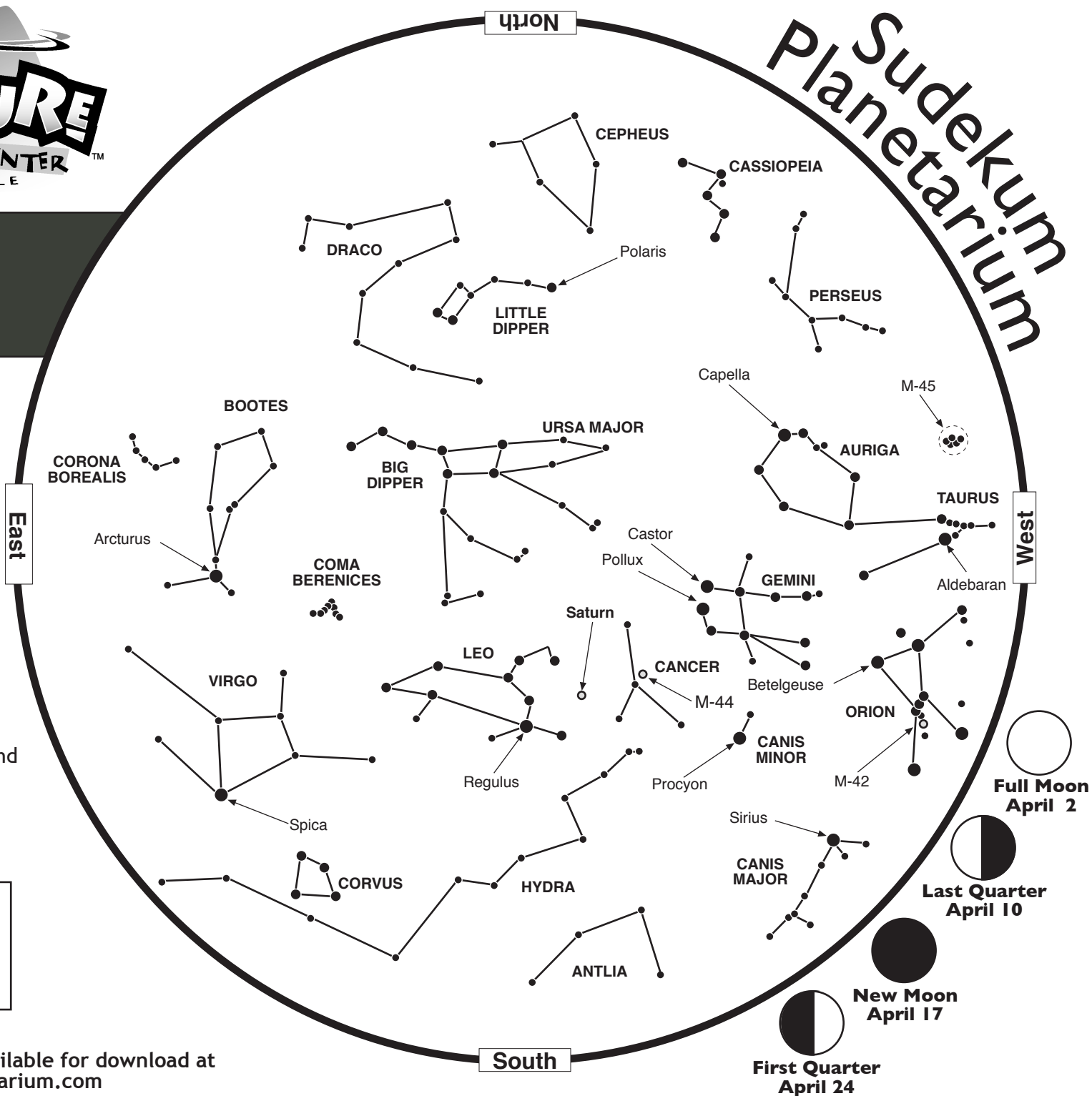
• **Nebulas:**

M-42 - The Orion Nebula

From Nashville:

	Sunrise	Sunset
April 1	6:34 AM	7:09 PM
April 15	6:14 AM	7:21 PM
May 1	5:55 AM	7:34 PM

FREE monthly star charts are available for download at www.SudekumPlanetarium.com





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Farewell to Orion

Spring is well underway. The trees, that were barren for so long, have exploded with green leaves. Flowers are painting the landscape with vibrant colors. Allergies are in high gear.

It is also at this time that the brilliant stars of winter set with the Sun. This month we say goodbye to a wintertime favorite, **Orion the Hunter**. You will have to look low in the west after the sky gets dark to find him. Each night Orion appears a little closer to the horizon. By the end of the month the mighty hunter will be setting just as sunset ends.

Viewing Venus, Seeing Saturn

Every night this month, brilliant **Venus** appears a little higher in the western sky at sunset. It easily outshines everything else in the night sky except the Moon. In fact, Venus is so bright right now, that with a little persistence and a clear sky, you might be able to see Venus with the naked eye during the daytime!

The trick is knowing exactly where to look, because it certainly won't stand out. One trick is to wait until the Moon is near Venus, and let that be your guide. Your next opportunity for such a guide is **April 19th**, when a thin **crescent Moon** will be high in the sky in the daytime, just a short distance west of Venus.

You'll also need a pair of binoculars. But before heading outside, remember that the **Sun**

will be out, and that means a serious warning is coming. **NEVER look at the Sun with binoculars or a telescope, EVER.** You should not even stare at the Sun with just your eyes - even while wearing sunglasses. The simple fact is, you can permanently damage your eyes and your vision.

To play it safe, stand somewhere outside so that the Sun is blocked out but the Moon and Venus aren't. Try near the corner of a building, or, if it's late afternoon, with the Sun behind a wall. Not only will this help avoid an accidental glimpse of the Sun through your binoculars, but with the Sun's glare blocked, you'll stand a better chance of seeing Venus.

If you're out on the 19th about 5 pm facing west, Venus will be high in the west, a short distance above and to the left of the Moon. Start with the Moon, and scan with your binoculars until you see a bright point of light. Once you've found it, hold still! Don't move your head, but lower your binoculars. Can you see it? It may still take some careful looking before you spot it.

If after all that you still can't find Venus, don't feel too bad. It is tricky to do. You'll have another chance on May 19th, when Venus and the Moon will be even closer to each other. But no matter what, just wait until the Sun starts to set - you'll see Venus soon enough!

Meanwhile, ringed **Saturn** isn't nearly as bright as Venus, but still stands out nicely under dark skies. Look for it high in the southern sky, just to the right of **Leo the Lion**. If you're not sure you've found it, grab those binoculars again. You won't see the rings distinctly in binoculars, but if you have Saturn in your sights, it will look larger than the pinpoint stars, and slightly oval in shape. To get a clearer view of the rings, you'll need a small telescope.

Great telescopic target **Jupiter** will be visible this month, but you'll have to stay up a bit. Watch in the southeast after midnight.

Speaking of Telescopes...

If you don't have a telescope handy - or even if you do - come join the Barnard Seyfert Astronomical Society for a **FREE Public Star Party on Saturday, May 5, 2007 from 8:30-10:30 pm.** We'll be in front of **Adventure Science Center** for a view of Venus, Saturn and plenty of springtime constellations. Star parties are a great opportunity to see celestial sights and ask questions of astronomy enthusiasts from around the area. As usual, this event is weather dependant. If it's cloudy or worse, the event will be cancelled. If the weather is iffy, check the planetarium web site or call AstroLine at **615-401-5092** before travelling.

May 5 is also the date of our annual **Astronomy Day** celebration. Our featured speaker is Dr. David Weintraub of Vanderbilt University, author of "Is Pluto a Planet?" which explores that very question. Along the way to defining planethood, Weintraub touches upon major astronomical discoveries ranging from Uranus, Neptune, and Ceres to the Kuiper Belt and beyond.

Construction Update

Once the old planetarium was torn down, it took quite some time for the site to be readied for construction to begin. Concrete has been poured for exterior walls, and the large drum that will house the new planetarium is starting to take shape.

Even the main building of the Science Center looks a little different since the right front corner has been nibbled off by a hungry trackhoe. This will be one of the primary connection points to the new wing that opens into the two story Test Bed area.

Visit <http://www.SudekumPlanetarium.com> to see video of the construction including a growing timelapse movie of the process. You can also read the press release and see the renderings of what the new building and exhibit will look like.

For information about programs and events at the Sudekum Planetarium and Adventure Science Center, visit www.SudekumPlanetarium.com

For current night sky information, call AstroLine at 615-401-5092.