

**August 2007**  
 10:00 p.m. on August 1  
 9:00 p.m. on August 15  
 8:00 p.m. on September 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.

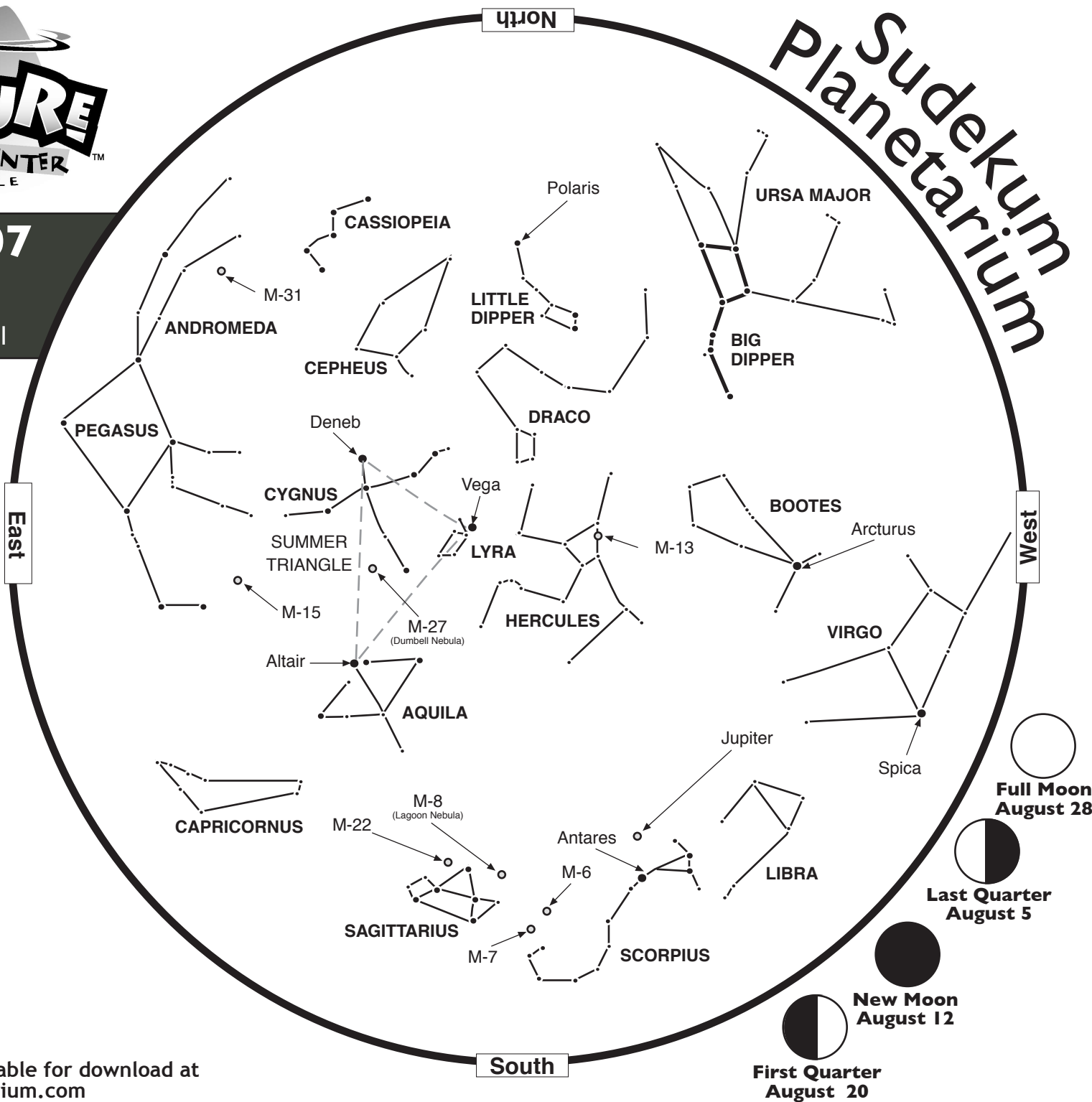
- **Bright Stars**
- **Medium Bright Stars**
- **Faint Stars**

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

- M-13: The Hercules open star cluster
- M-15: A globular cluster in Pegasus
- M-31: The Andromeda Galaxy
- M-57: The Ring Nebula in Lyra

From Nashville:

	Sunrise	Sunset
August 1	5:53 AM	7:53 PM
August 15	6:04 AM	7:39 PM
September 1	6:18 AM	7:16 PM





## August 2007

### If It's August...

It's time for the annual "Mars will appear as big as the Full Moon" email! It's been going around this time of year, every year since 2003... and it's *still* wrong!

This widespread email says that on August 27, Mars will be so close to the Earth, it will look as big as the full Moon. This claim is a misinterpretation of a real event in 2003 when Mars was relatively close to Earth. But Mars really never gets *that* close to Earth. The only way Mars would ever look as big as the Full Moon from Earth would be through the eyepiece of a telescope.

The email never mentions the year this is supposed to happen. And so the message gets passed around year after year, with no signs of stopping. If you get this email, our advice is: click "delete"!

### Total Lunar Eclipse August 28

Still, if you want to imagine what Mars could look like if it were as big as the Full Moon, you'll have a good opportunity on August 28, when the Full Moon slips into the shadow of the Earth, during a **total lunar eclipse**. As it nears totality, the Moon will turn a deep red color, reminiscent of Mars' rusty color. The color change is caused by Earth's atmosphere scattering sunlight on its way to the lunar surface.

Here's the catch: the lunar eclipse begins at 3:51 AM on the morning of August 28. It reaches

totality at 4:52 AM and ends at 6:18 AM. From our location in Nashville, the Moon sets in the west at 6:21 AM that morning, so we won't get to see the entire event. Just as totality ends, the Sun will be rising, and legions of sleepy astronomers will be wondering if they can get away with sleeping in on a Tuesday morning.

There won't be a star party for this particular lunar eclipse, but if you still want to see it, you don't need any special equipment. All you need are clear skies, your own two eyes, a good alarm clock, and caffeine.

If you choose to pass up this opportunity for getting up really early, the next total lunar eclipse will be on February 21, 2008. For that one, it will be at a much more reasonable time of night - in the mid-evening!

### Mars, Up Close and Personal

Giant **Jupiter** shines brightly in the early evening, after sunset. Look toward the south where it will be the brightest single point of light in the sky.

Meanwhile, If you want to see how big Mars *really* looks, you'll have to stay up a little later. This month, Mars rises in the east after midnight: 12:45 AM on the 1st and 12:00 am on the 30th. It will look like a bright red-orange point of light. Be careful not to mistake it for the slightly dimmer red star **Aldebaran** just below it in the constellation **Taurus** the Bull. If you aren't sure which is which, watch for any twinkling. As a general rule, stars twinkle, planets don't.

This month will also feature the launch of the next robotic mission to Mars, NASA's **Phoenix** lander. At least, we really hope so! As this chart

goes to press, Phoenix is sitting on the launch pad, being prepared for launch sometime between the August 3rd and 24th. If it does not lift-off between those dates, it will be two years before Earth and Mars are in the correct positions again so to make another launch attempt possible.

Phoenix is headed to the northern polar region of Mars. Unlike the Mars robotic geologists **Spirit** and **Opportunity**, Phoenix is not a rover. When it lands, it will remain in the same spot. Even so, it carries an impressive array of tools for examining the soil and ice on the Martian surface. If everything goes according to plan, Phoenix is scheduled to land in May or June 2008, depending on its actual launch date.

### Summer Star Party

Join us and the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society (BSAS) for the Perseid Meteor Shower! The next **FREE** public star party is scheduled for **Saturday, August 11, 2007 from 8:30 - 10:30 PM at Edwin Warner Park**. Weather permitting, this should be a good one., with no Moon up, so the skies will be dark. Jupiter will also be visible.

This star party will be at a **different location** than usual. We'll be at **Ridgefield**, accessed behind picnic shelter #4 in the park. Future star parties will be back at the Special Events Field once improvements there are finished. For directions to Ridgefield, call Warner Park Nature Center at 352-6299 or check our website.

For more about BSAS, visit their web site at [www.bsasnashville.com](http://www.bsasnashville.com).

### Getting Taller

Keep an eye on our web site for the latest planetarium construction news!

For information about programs and events at the Sudekum Planetarium and Adventure Science Center, visit [www.SudekumPlanetarium.com](http://www.SudekumPlanetarium.com)

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