

**August 2008**  
 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.

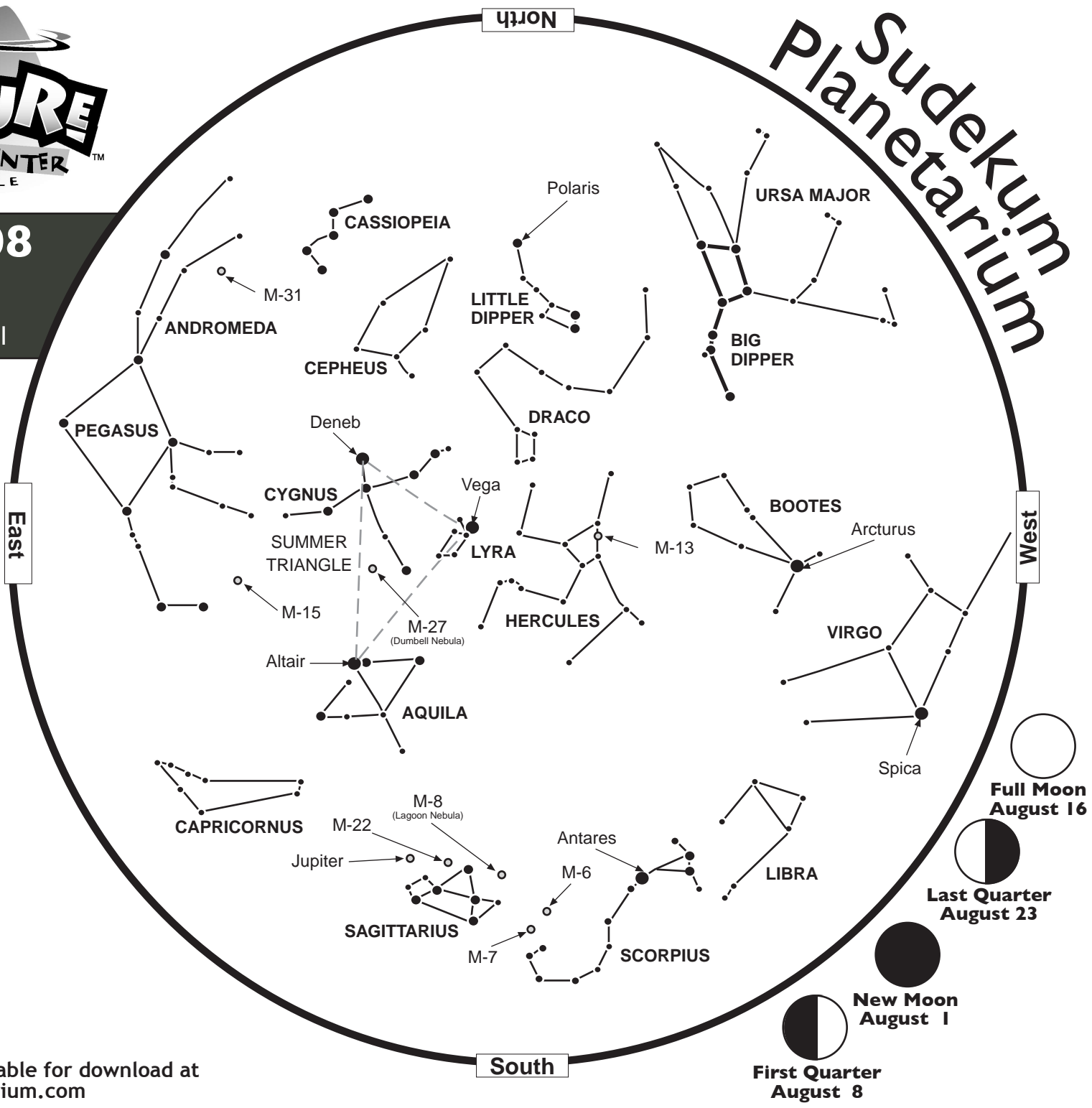
- **Bright Stars**
- **Medium Bright Stars**
- **Faint Stars**

**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    | 5:54 AM | 7:52 PM |
| August 15   | 6:06 AM | 7:37 PM |
| September 1 | 6:19 AM | 7:14 PM |



# THE NEW SUDEKUM PLANETARIUM

AT ADVENTURE SCIENCE CENTER  
August 2008

## Parade of Planets

As August begins, **Jupiter** is a brilliant point of light shining in the southeastern sky after sunset. The largest planet in our solar system is a great target for telescopes. Fortunately you'll have all night to study it. The same can't be said for four other planets that all appear low in the west after sunset.

Just after the Sun dips below the horizon, take a look for **Venus**. You'll need a flat western horizon clear of trees, buildings or other obstacles. Even amid the glow of sunset, Venus will easily stand out. Look for Venus at about the same time every night, and you'll notice it gradually get higher above the horizon. This 'evening star' will grace our evening sky now through the end of the year.

The first two planets were easy, but finding the next two will be more of a challenge. To begin, you'll need a pair of binoculars and a western horizon clear of haze.

On **August 14**, Venus will be just 10° above the western horizon right after sunset. Train your binoculars on Venus, and you may be able to pick out several other points of light nearby. The brightest of these should appear below and to the right of Venus on August 14. This prize is the innermost planet to the Sun, **Mercury**.

Once you've found Mercury, try looking for it without binoculars. Amazingly, many astronomy enthusiasts have never seen this small rocky world because it never appears very far from the Sun as seen from Earth.

Almost on a line between Venus and Mercury and about halfway between the two lies **Saturn**. Even in binoculars, the solar system's second largest planet won't look like much. Right now, Saturn is almost one billion miles from the Earth, and the glow of sunset doesn't help either.

Last is **Mars**, which is a faint yellow-orange dot twice as high above the horizon as Venus and 15° to the left. Mars is really unimpressive at this time because it is more than 200 million miles from Earth. Yes, that's much closer than Saturn, but Mars is also much smaller. Be patient, and Mars will become a bright and worthy telescope target at the very end of 2009 and early 2010.

Now that you have found all four planets low in the western sky, keep checking on them every clear night. Because Mercury is so close to the Sun, its apparent motion in our sky is quite fast. On August 15, Mercury will have jumped up to sit next to Saturn. After one more day, Mercury will appear as high as Venus. Over the next four weeks, Mercury and Venus will be racing toward Mars until September 11 when the three worlds will reach conjunction as seen from here on Earth.

## Catch a Scorpion

Summer is the best time for Middle Tennesseans to look for **Scorpius** and **Sagittarius** as they drift just above a clear southern horizon. Scorpius is relatively easy to spot especially because of the red star **Antares** that marks the heart of the scorpion. Since there are few scorpions in Tennessee, some people prefer to see a giant fish hook or a saxophone in this group of stars.

Sagittarius is known as the archer, but the archer is not human. According to mythology, the archer is a strange creature called a centaur: half-man, half-horse. Finding anything in the stars that even remotely looks like a centaur is a true test of the imagination.

Instead of looking for an archer, we suggest you look for Sagittarius the "teapot" instead and leave it at that.

## Non-Events

Many calendars and the news media will likely mention the **total solar eclipse** on **August 1**, but don't get too excited. Totality is only visible along a narrow line running through Greenland, Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia. Observers in Europe will get to see a partial solar eclipse.

Usually solar eclipses are preceded or followed by a lunar eclipse. In fact, there is a **partial lunar eclipse** on **August 16**, but practically the only place on Earth it won't be seen is North America.

The next **total solar eclipse** visible in North America occurs **August 21, 2017**. Totality will be visible along a narrow band running across the United States, and right through Nashville and Southern Kentucky. So mark your calendars!

## Summer Star Parties

The next **FREE public star party** is scheduled for **Saturday, August 9**, from 8:30 - 10:30 PM at the special events field in Edwin Warner Park. This is located at the corner of Old Hickory Boulevard and Vaughn Road with the entrance off Vaughn Road. For more detailed driving directions, check our web site.

Members of the **Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society** (BSAS) [www.bsasnashville.com](http://www.bsasnashville.com) will set up their telescopes to provide views of the Moon, Jupiter, and other summer splendors. Everyone is welcome!

If it is cloudy or raining, the star party will be canceled. If the weather is questionable, check [www.SudekumPlanetarium.com](http://www.SudekumPlanetarium.com) before leaving home or call AstroLine at (615) 401-5092.

*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.*