



October 2008

10:00 p.m. on October 1
 9:00 p.m. on October 15
 8:00 p.m. on November 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**

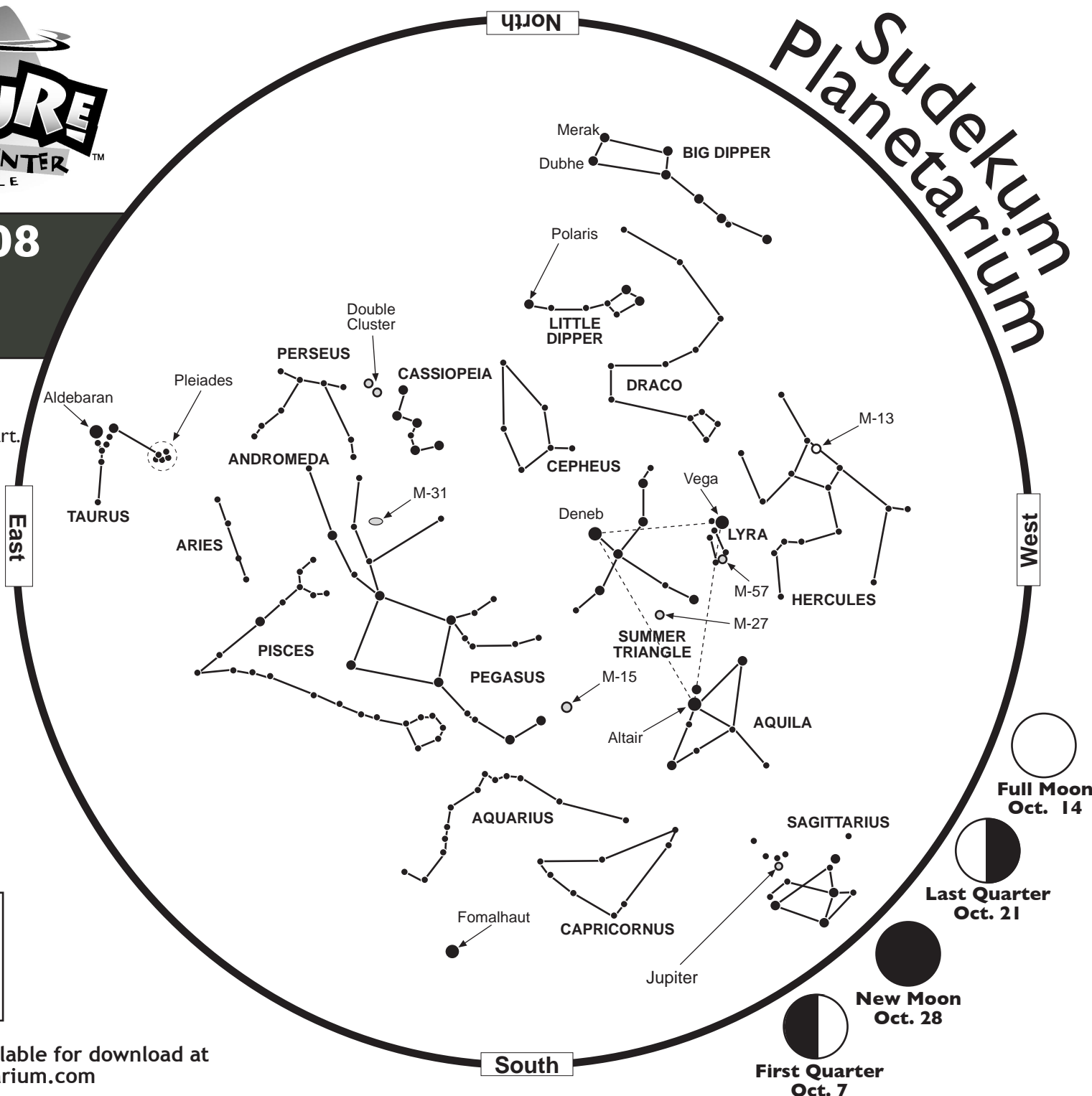
Scan the sky with binoculars: the darker the sky, the better.

- **Globular Star Clusters:**
 M-13 in Hercules
 M-15 in Pegasus
- **'Double Cluster'**
 Between Perseus and Cassiopeia
- **Planetary Nebulae in the Summer Triangle:**
 M-57 The Ring Nebula
 M-27 The Dumbbell Nebula
- **A Spiral Galaxy:**
 M-31 in Andromeda

From Nashville:

	Sunrise	Sunset
October 1	6:43 AM	6:30 PM
October 15	6:54 AM	6:10 PM
November 1	7:10 AM	5:51 PM

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



THE NEW SUDEKUM PLANETARIUM

AT ADVENTURE SCIENCE CENTER
October 2008

Non-Partisan Planets

Throughout August and September, spotting **Venus** just above the western horizon shortly after sunset was a bit more difficult than usual. With the hazy skies of Middle Tennessee, the normally bright planet was tough to spot, while people out in drier locales had no trouble finding this spectacular "evening star". Now as the year progresses, Venus appears higher in the western sky each night, slowly rising above our horizon's haze, and challenging **Jupiter** for domination of the evening sky.

A sliver of a **Moon** will make a pretty companion for Venus early in the evening of **October 1**. If the weather doesn't cooperate at just the right time, you'll get another chance to observe this sight. On **Halloween evening**, Venus will be a bright point of light with a pretty **crescent Moon** nearby smiling like a Cheshire Cat. Look for this pair just after the Sun sets around 6:00 PM. Try looking at them with binoculars!

After Venus sets, look for **Jupiter**, the largest planet in our solar system, shining in the southwestern sky. There aren't any other bright stars nearby, so Jupiter stands out. As a general rule stars twinkle and planets don't, so you should be able to easily identify Jupiter.

Get up early to see **Saturn**, which rises in the east at 5:00 am at the beginning of October and by 3:00 am by the end of the month. It will appear as a pale yellow star near **Leo the lion**. Saturn won't look as bright as usual because we are viewing the rings nearly edge-on.

As Saturn orbits the Sun, our view of the rings changes. At times, the wide, flat surface of the rings is facing Earth. Approximately once every fifteen years, the rings are seen edge-on and seem to disappear. Even though Saturn looks strange without its gaudy rings, astronomers value this observing opportunity to look for new moons orbiting the planet.

Late in October, careful observers may be able to catch **Mercury** peeking above the eastern horizon just before sunrise. The dawn glow will make it a challenge to find, but binoculars may increase your chance of success.

For those who are fans of **Mars**, the red planet is now too close to the Sun to see, and won't be easily visible until 2009. Meanwhile, the Phoenix lander continues to study the Martian surface near the north polar cap. If all goes well, it will continue until the cold Martian winter takes hold. The lander's solar panels won't be able generate enough power, and carbon dioxide ice will eventually envelop Phoenix, bringing the mission to a frosty end.

Constellation Candidates

As autumn begins, the sky gets dark early enough for almost everyone to step out and find a few constellations. High in the west are the three stars that form the **Summer Triangle**. The easiest of the three star patterns to locate is **Cygnus the swan**, diving toward the horizon.

Look to the east of the Summer Triangle for the **Great Square of Pegasus** among them. Actually, it's slightly more of a rectangle shape, or perhaps a diamond.

In mythology, Pegasus was a magnificent winged horse, but many observers have a hard time seeing such a creature outlined in the stars. The neck and head of the horse jut out from the western corner of the square like a hockey stick. The front legs coming from the southern corner

star look too short. The two long curving lines of stars extending from the eastern corner may look like they should be the hind legs of Pegasus, but they are really the flowing gown of another constellation, **Andromeda the princess**. If you can't see a flying horse in the sky, what kind of star picture can you imagine?

Star Party Platforms

The next **FREE public star party** is scheduled for **Saturday, October 4**, from 8-10 PM at the Visitor Center at Longhunter State Park. Another **FREE star party** is scheduled for **Saturday, November 8**, from 8-10 PM at Shelby Bottoms.

Telescope targets for both star parties will include the waxing crescent Moon, Jupiter, the Pleiades star cluster, and the Andromeda Galaxy. Members of the **Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society (BSAS)** will set up their telescopes to provide views of these and more.

For driving directions, check the Sudekum Planetarium web site, where you can also find helpful tips for enjoying a star party. If it is cloudy or raining, the star party will be canceled. If the weather is questionable, visit our web site or call **Astroline** at **615-401-5092** before leaving home.

Telescope Talk

How do you buy a telescope? *Should* you buy a telescope? What are the best gifts for an astronomy fan? **Dr. Spencer Buckner of Austin Peay State University** will address these questions and more at Adventure Science Center on **Thursday, November 20**, starting at 7:30 PM.

Dr. Buckner's talk is part of November's monthly meeting of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society. You don't need to be a BSAS member to enjoy his talk, but if you'd like to learn more about joining Nashville's astronomy club, visit www.bsasnashville.com.

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.