

Kitt Peak Nightly Observing Program

Splendors of the Universe on YOUR Night!

Many pictures are links to larger versions.

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The **Double-Double** (ϵ Lyrae) looks like two stars in binoculars, but a good telescope shows that both of these two are themselves binaries. However, there may be as many as ten stars in this system! The distant pairs are about 0.16 light-year apart and take about half a million years to orbit one another. The Double-Double is about 160 light-years from Earth.



In the handle of the Big Dipper, **Mizar & Alcor** (ζ & 80 Ursae Majoris) or the “Horse & Rider” form a naked-eye double star. They are traveling through space together about 80 light-years away from us, separated by about a light-year. However, it is unknown if they are actually orbiting each other. A telescope splits Mizar itself into two stars, but these both are again doubles, bringing the total in this system to six.



Coma Berenices: “Berenice's Hair,” a giant Y-shaped open star cluster. It is only 280 lightyears away and appears a bit east of Leo.



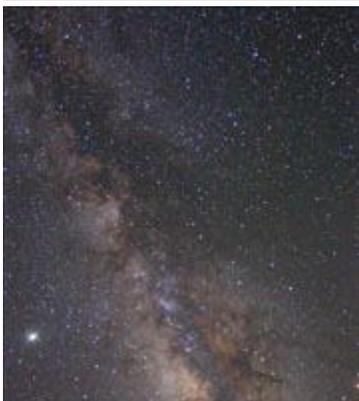
M8: The "Lagoon Nebula." A huge cloud of gas and dust beside an open cluster of stars (NGC 6530). The Lagoon is a stellar nursery, 4,100 lightyears away, towards the galactic core.



M4: A globular cluster appearing near Antares, in Scorpius. It is on the small side, as globular clusters go: only 70-75 lightyears across. It is about 7,200 lightyears away, which makes it possibly the closest globular cluster to our solar system.



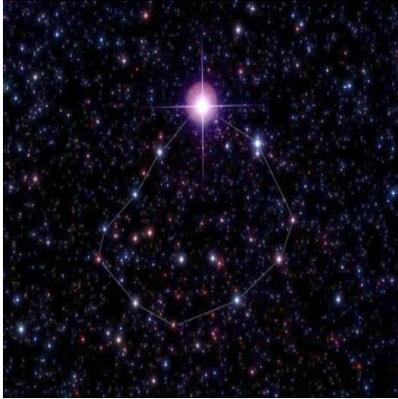
Jupiter is the largest planet in the Solar System, a "gas giant" 11 Earth-diameters across. Its atmosphere contains the Great Red Spot, a long-lived storm 2-3 times the size of the Earth. The 4 large Galilean satellites and at least 63 smaller moons orbit Jupiter.



Milky Way: That clumpy band of light is evidence that we live in a disk-shaped galaxy. Its pale glow is light from about 200 billion suns!



Coathanger Cluster: Also called Cr 399, or Brocchi's Cluster, this close open cluster reminds me of my hall closet. Chaotic stellar orbital motion can sometimes make interesting shapes!



The Engagement Ring: Through binoculars, the North Star (Polaris) seems to be the brightest on a small ring of stars. Not a constellation or cluster, this asterism looks like a diamond engagement ring on which Polaris shines brightly as the diamond.

Lucas Snyder

Your Telescope Operator and Guide.
Thank you for joining me this evening!
See you soon!!

The web page for the program in which you just participated is at [Nightly Observing Program](#). Most of the above images were taken as part of the Overnight Telescope Observing Program. For more information on this unique experience please visit [Overnight Telescope Observing Program](#).

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