

Pegasus, Orion in view

February sky is 'spectacular'

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In spite of often arctic temperatures, the night skies of February offer a spectacular and ever-changing panorama. The price of admission? Only your interest in seeing it. Let's start with the constellations. If you don't know them very well yet, come to the McManis Planetarium at Cranbrook Institute of Science or get a good book on constellations from a bookstore or local library and learn them.

If you get out about an hour after sunset, you can still see the Great Square of the constellation Pegasus (the flying horse). Take a good look at it because this is the last month, for a while, that you will

be able to see it easily. Above Pegasus you will find the long body of Andromeda (the princess).

If it's good and dark, you should be able to see a fuzzy patch of light in the middle of Andromeda (a pair of binoculars will help if you're looking from the city). This patch of light, a galaxy containing more than 300 billion stars, is the most distant object that can be seen from the earth with the naked eye. This galaxy is over 2.1 million light years away.

ORION (THE HUNTER) will be very prominent this month high in the south. Hanging from the three "belt" stars of Orion will be three stars that form his sword. The middle of these three stars is called the "fuzzy cloud of dust and hydro-

gen gas, some 1,500 light years distant. This diffuse nebula, as it is classified, appears as a fuzzy patch of light to the unaided eye, but some detail can be glimpsed in a pair of binoculars.

Southeast of Orion, Castor Major (the big dog) will be easily found because it is marked by the brightest of all the evening stars, Sirius. Northwest of Orion will be the "M" shaped pattern of stars that identifies Taurus (the bull).

In the bull's shoulder is a compact group of stars called the Pleiades (the seven sisters). See how many stars you can find in this cluster. Normal sighted observers should be able to see six—the record is 13.

North of Orion and Taurus will be Auriga (the charioteer). Southeast of Auriga will be Gemini (the twins) with its two bright stars, Castor and Pollux. The early evening eastern sky this month will be dominated by Leo (the lion).

Between Leo and Gemini is the rather inconspicuous constellation called Cancer (the crab). In the middle of Cancer is an open cluster of stars, easily seen with the naked eye, called the Praesepe (the beehive).

LET'S TURN to the planets now. Finding them this month will be fairly simple; all you have to do is follow the moon and learn how to judge distances in degrees. Just remember that the full moon is 4 degrees wide and that your fist, when held at arm's length, is 10 degrees wide along its broadest part. With this in mind, you should be able to guess distances in the sky with reasonable accuracy.

On Feb. 1, the moon—three days short of its first quarter—will be four degrees (or almost half of a fist) north of the bright planet Jupiter in the southwestern sky. Then, on Feb. 18, it will be five degrees south of Mars, the red planet. On Feb. 13, it will be five degrees south of the ringed planet Saturn. On Feb. 20, five days past full, the moon will be one degree south of Uranus.

You might just be able to spot Uranus without a telescope in a dark sky, but don't be disappointed if you can't. To see Neptune, which will be one degree south of the moon on Feb. 22, you will have to use binoculars.

Block grant meeting set

James H. Blair, assistant secretary for equal opportunity in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, will be the main speaker at a community development block grant conference Saturday, Jan. 31, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Episcopal Diocese Center in Detroit.

The conference, which is sponsored by the Michigan Committee on Law and Housing and more than 30 co-sponsoring groups, will focus on citizen involvement in federal and community housing programs.

Blair was formerly the executive director of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

The program entitled Opportunities for Citizen Involvement Under the New Fed-

eral Housing and Community Development Programs will promote citizen participation in planning and spending decisions under the community development block grant programs, provide basic information on laws, regulations and programs, and assist citizens groups in obtaining financing for various projects.

Scheduled panelists and workshop participants include David Breck, mayor of Birmingham; Clifford Schrupp of the Northwest Interfaith Center serving western Wayne County; Robert Malakoff of the U.S. Senate housing subcommittee; William Morris, director of NAACP housing programs; Charles Foreman of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing; and Frank Senier of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Local men supervise WSU grant research

Three Oakland County men are among those responsible for supervising some lucrative research pro-

grams at Wayne State University.

The programs are among a January total of \$1.6 million in gifts, grants, agreements and contracts recently reported by WSU's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Services. The total is 15 per cent above the January 1975 figure.

Under the supervision of Dean Sidney Dilleck of Birmingham, the School of Social Work attracted 21 per cent of the monthly revenue through three contracts with the Michigan Department of Social Services totaling \$339,075.

The Skillman Foundation awarded a \$55,207 grant renewal for continuing research into infectious diseases. The project seeks to facilitate rapid and specific diagnosis and treatment of infections caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. The studies are being done under the direction of Dr. A. Martin Lerner of Birmingham in the School of Medicine's internal medicine department.

Ronald R. Mourant of Farmington, associate professor in the College of Engineering's industrial engineering and operations research department, will investigate the effect of convex rear-view mirrors on driver performance under terms of a \$40,000 agreement with General Motors Corp.

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