



# CAPE FEAR Skies

Monthly Newsletter  
**Cape Fear Astronomical Society**  
Serving Wilmington, NC and Surrounding Areas



*Cape Fear Astronomical Society is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.*

**April 2024**

## President's Message

*by Ben Steelman*

Good news -- we're on somebody's bucket list.

"100 Things to do in Wilmington, North Carolina Before You Die," a new book from Reddy Press, lists the Cape Fear Astronomical Society as No. 57 in its list of attractions. (Hint: They're not in any particular order.)

Actually, author Amy Comry Davis seems more interested in the Statewide Star Party activities at Carolina Beach State Park. (She seems to think it was all our idea, although she does mention the Cape Fear Museum.)

At least she mentions our monthly meetings and the fact we have other activities, and at least she gets the Web address right.

Hopefully, many will be back from viewing The Eclipse and be able to support the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Star Party. And hopefully, we'll have clear skies!

★★★★★



## 12th Annual Star Party! NC Science Festival Event

 Fri, Apr 12 2024, 7 - 10pm

 [Carolina Beach State Park](#)

[1010 State Park Road, Carolina Beach, NC](#)

[28428](#)

For "gAstronomy," our pre-meeting Sunday dinner, Jon Stewart-Taylor proposes La Oaxaquena Taqueria, next to P.T.'s Grill at 4540 Fountain Drive, not too far from the UNCW campus. Jon and Kathleen have eaten there and say it's great. In case you couldn't guess, the cuisine is Mexican. So we will go there, since we went to McAlister's last month and emails say a couple others want to go there.

Think of where to go for our May "gAstronomy".

★★★★★

We are still looking for a volunteer to take over as chair of the Observatory Committee. It doesn't require great expertise, just a little time and the ability to work with others.

*Keep looking up!*

# Calendar

## March 2024

### Date – Event – Time

- 01 Last Quarter Moon
- 05 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);  
7 PM; New Moon**
- 06 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);  
7 PM; New Moon**
- 08 New Moon
- 08 Total Solar Eclipse - Partial in Cape Fear area (~80%)**
- 10 Mars near Saturn: morning
- 12 State Wide Star Party 7 PM to 10 PM - State Wide Star  
Party with Cape Fear Museum; Carolina Beach State  
Park**
- 14 ★ Cape Fear Astro Monthly Meeting ★  
GAstronomy Meeting  
Sunday, February 9, 5:00pm – 6:45pm  
(Dinner, prior to the Monthly Meeting)  
La Oaxaquena Taqueria  
4540 Fountain Dr  
Wilmington  
<https://www.laoaxaquenataqueria.com/>**
- CFAS Monthly Meeting  
7:00pm – 9:00pm - 212 DeLoach Hall; UNCW  
Also simulcast via Zoom**
- 15 First Quarter Moon
- 22 Lyrid Meteor Shower: ZHR 18; Waxing Gibbous Moon
- 23 Full Moon
- 26 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);  
7:00 PM; 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Moon**
- 27 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);  
7:00 PM; 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Moon**
- 29 Mars and Neptune conjunction; ~ 0.2° separation:  
morning

### Astro phenomena from:

<https://www.universalworkshop.com/astronomical-calendar-any-year/>

### 2024 Public Events

Friday, April 12: 7 - 10pm - STAR PARTY  
2024; by the Cape Fear Museum; CBSP  
(replaces State Wide Star Party)  
4.6 day old crescent Moon

May 18 – CBSP; park closes 10 PM

June 15 – CBSP; park closes 10 PM

July 13 – CBSP; park closes 10 PM

Aug 10 – CBSP; park closes 10 PM

Sep 14 – CBSP; park closes 10 PM  
&

Sept. 14 - International Observe the  
Moon Night

Oct 12 – CBSP; park closes 9 PM

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CBSP = Carolina Beach State Park

### 2024 Monthly Meeting Dates

Apr. 14 - Ben Steelman on Edwin  
Hubble

May 5 - Mitchell Torlkelson and  
Jessie Townsend from UNCW on  
SeaHawk/HawkEye science and  
related work

Jun. 9 - Field Trip to Ingram  
Planetarium

Jul. 14, Aug. 11, Sep. 8, Oct. 13,  
Nov. 10, Dec. 8

## Planned Monthly Presentations

See the list on the Calendar Page.

### STARS



### This Month's Quote

Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. **It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.**

- Thomas Jefferson

### Solar Observing Safety

by Karl Adlon

#### Eye Safety

Whether you observing naked eye, with binoculars or with telescope, appropriate solar filters are **REQUIRED** except during Totality. Our area is not on the path of Totality, so solar filters are required at all times. Otherwise, permanent damage to your eyes can/will happen.

#### Telescope Safety

While they were not solar observing, but I've read about 2 cases where owners were talking to others about their truss tube Dobs on a sunny day. Not paying attention to their scopes' orientation to the Sun, one smelled smoke and found wooden parts singed and another found their plastic light shield severely warped. Another reason for mirror covers on these scopes. OBTW: neither of these events involved me and my scope.

#### Personal Safety

If you might be walking about during totality, or at night, be aware of your surroundings. A flashlight may be useful during totality and a red one is required at night, but maybe not under a streetlight.

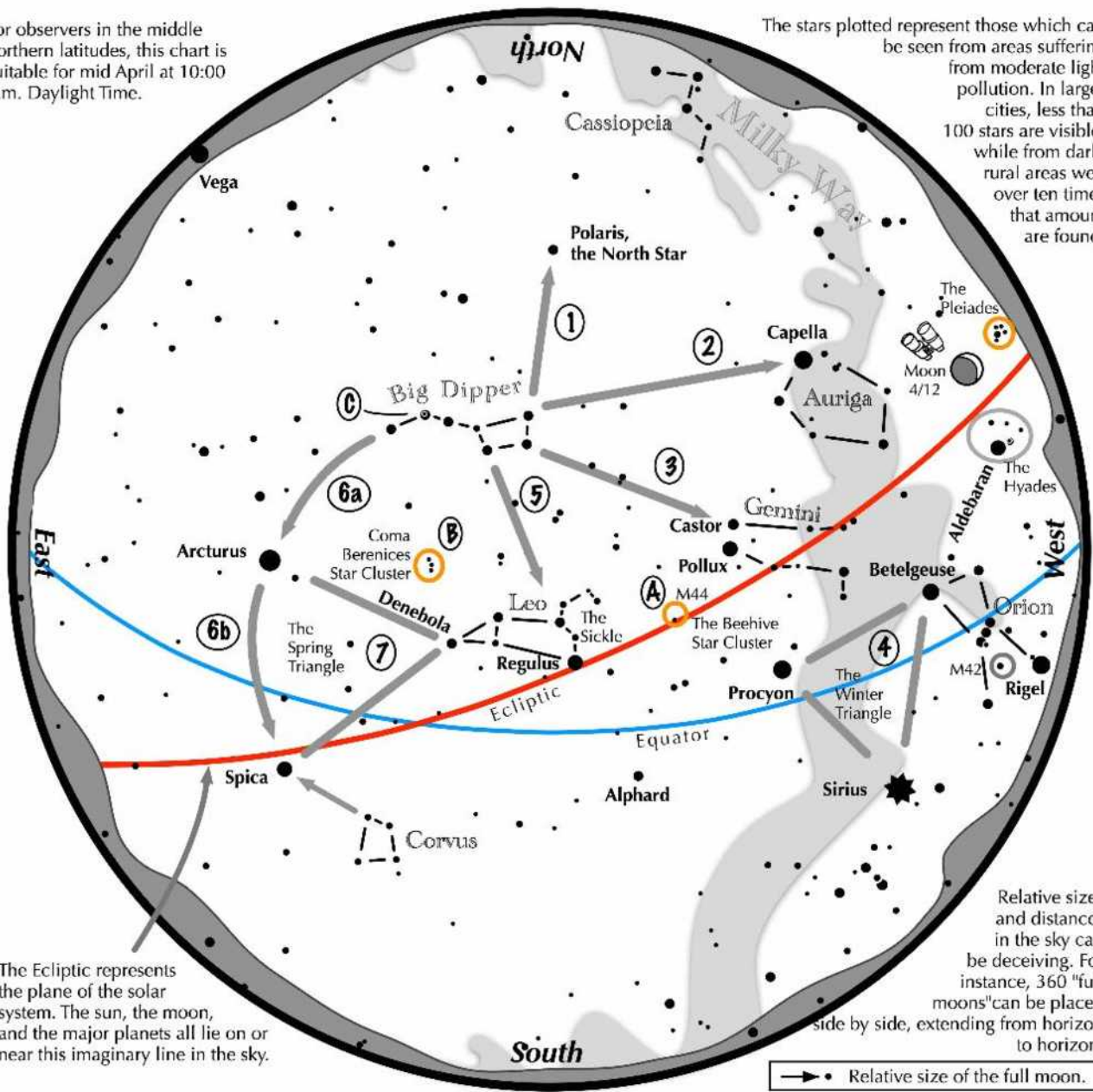
The guy at right was a daytime visitor to our front yard!



# Navigating the April Night Sky, Northern Hemisphere

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid April at 10:00 p.m. Daylight Time.

The stars plotted represent those which can be seen from areas suffering from moderate light pollution. In larger cities, less than 100 stars are visible, while from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



The Ecliptic represents the plane of the solar system. The sun, the moon, and the major planets all lie on or near this imaginary line in the sky.

Relative sizes and distances in the sky can be deceiving. For instance, 360 "full moons" can be placed side by side, extending from horizon to horizon.

→ • Relative size of the full moon.

## Navigating the April night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Extend an imaginary line north from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes Polaris, the North Star.
- 2 Draw another imaginary line west across the top two stars of the Dipper's bowl. It strikes Capella low in the northwest.
- 3 Through the two diagonal stars of the Dipper's bowl, draw a line pointing to the twin stars of Castor and Pollux in Gemini.
- 4 Look in the west-southwest for the bright Winter Triangle stars of Sirius, Procyon, and Betelgeuse.
- 5 Directly below the Dipper's bowl reclines the constellation Leo with its primary star, Regulus.
- 6 Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, then continues to Spica.
- 7 Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.

### Binocular Highlights

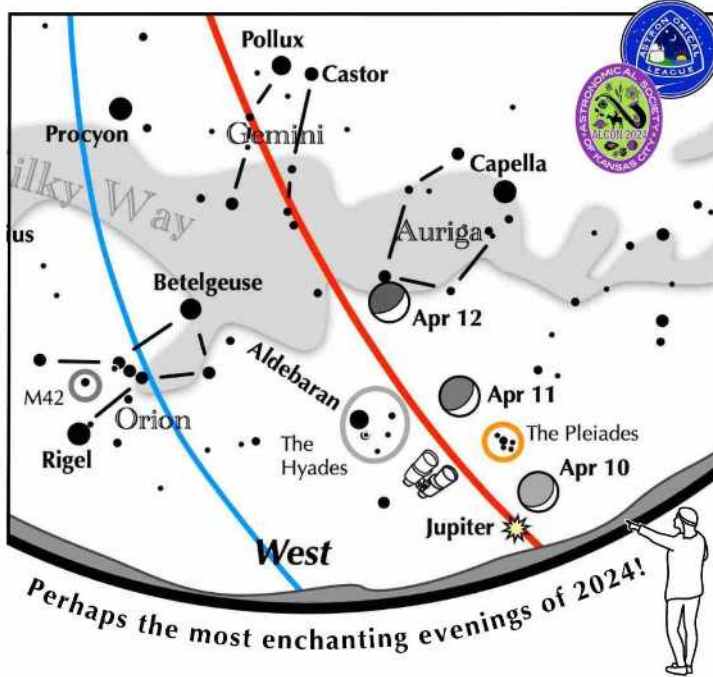
- A: M44, a star cluster barely visible to the naked eye, lies to the southeast of Pollux.
- B: Look nearly overhead for the loose star cluster of Coma Berenices.
- C: In the Big Dipper's handle shines Mizar next to a dimmer star, Alcor.



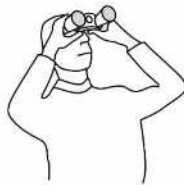
Astronomical League  
www.astroleague.org

Duplication allowed and encouraged for all free distribution.

**If you can see only one celestial event this April,  
see this one.**



*Perhaps the most enchanting evenings of 2024!*



**Enhance the scene –  
use binoculars!**

[www.astroleague.org](http://www.astroleague.org)

On April 10, 11, and 12, look low in the west-northwest 60 minutes after sunset.

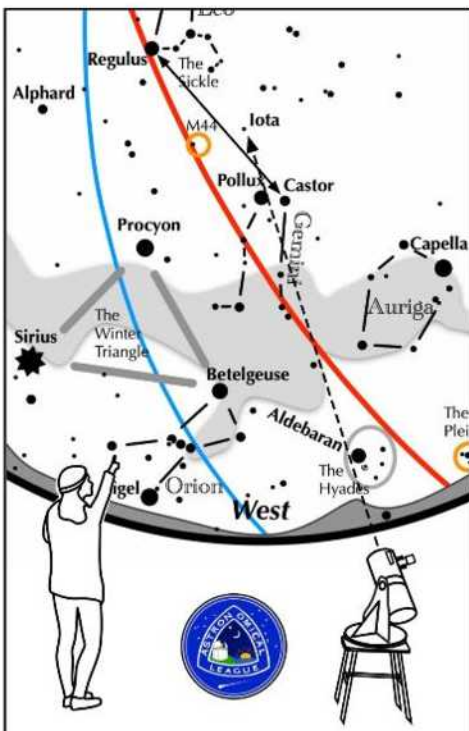
- The crescent moon, glowing full with earthshine, floats just above the horizon in the bright twilight on April 10. Next to it shines Jupiter, and above it lies the pretty Pleiades star cluster.
- On April 11, the slightly thicker, but more pronounced crescent moon moves between the Pleiades and the Hyades star clusters.
- On the third night, the crescent moon stands commandingly above the scene.

Editor's Comment:

No, No, No!

If you can only see one April event, see The Eclipse!

## ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE Double Star Activity



### Other Suns: Iota Cancri

#### How to find Iota Cancri on an April evening

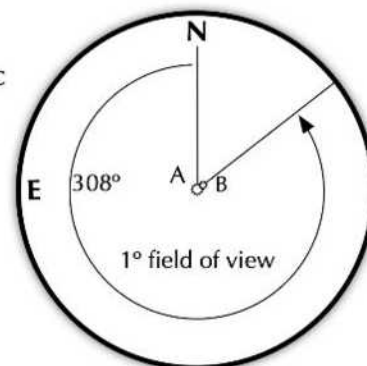
Face west. Look for the twin stars of Gemini, Castor and Pollux. Find Regulus. Iota lies about mid way between Castor and Regulus. It will be a moderately dim star.

Suggested magnification: >20x  
Suggested aperture: >3 inches

#### Iota Cnc

A-B separation: 31 sec  
A magnitude: 4.1  
B magnitude: 6.0  
Position Angle: 308°  
Colors:

yellow  
blue



## Get to Know YOUR Astronomical League



The Astronomical League (Astroleague or AL) is one of the largest amateur astronomical organizations in the world. The organization serves to encourage an interest in astronomy (especially amateur astronomy) and promote the science of astronomy by:

- ✓ fostering astronomical education;
- ✓ providing incentives for astronomical observation and research;
- ✓ assisting communication among amateur astronomical societies.



CFAS is one of over 300 member societies affiliated with the Astroleague. Your membership in CFAS allows you take full advantage of this relationship so periodically review the information below to see how the Astroleague can support your astronomical interests and endeavors.

Astroleague Home Page	<a href="http://www.astroleague.org">www.astroleague.org</a>
AL Observing Programs (Alphabetical Listing)	<a href="https://www.astroleague.org/alphabeticobserving/">https://www.astroleague.org/alphabeticobserving/</a>
Night Sky Tools	<a href="https://www.astroleague.org/navigating-the-night-sky-guides/">https://www.astroleague.org/navigating-the-night-sky-guides/</a>
Astroleague Store	<a href="https://store.astroleague.org/">https://store.astroleague.org/</a>
Current and Past Issues of <i>Reflector Magazine</i>	<a href="https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/">https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/</a>
<b>Additional AL News, Information and Reminders</b>	<p>Click <a href="#">HERE</a> for the Astroleague News Page and be sure to check the Astroleague Home Page weekly for new and important posts.</p> <p>Contact Hank Lyon, <a href="mailto:hlyon8448@gmail.com">hlyon8448@gmail.com</a>, for any changes to your Reflector delivery preferences (US Mail or Email).</p>

The Astroleague Correspondent (or ALCor) is your link between CFAS and the Astroleague. Don't hesitate to contact your ALCor if you need assistance with anything Astroleague related whether its general information or detailed coordination of observing program completions for certification. **Check back each month to see any new links, postings or reminders.**

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<b>CFAS Officers:</b> President: Ben Steelman Vice-Pres: Karl Adlon Associate VP: Jon Stewart-Taylor Secretary: George Pappayliou Treasurer: Bill Cooper ALCor: Hank Lyon	<b>Dues:</b> Dues for 2024 are \$25 for Individual and \$32 for Family Membership. Students dues are \$5 per year. Mail to: CFAS, P.O. Box 7685, Wilmington, NC 28406 <b>Contact Us:</b> You can contact CFAS at <a href="mailto:info@capefearastro.org">info@capefearastro.org</a> Our website is <a href="http://www.capefearastro.org/">http://www.capefearastro.org/</a>