

Stars over Sisters

By Nancy Montecinos
Correspondent

As the sun begins to set earlier in the evening and the days become warmer there are many beautiful objects to see here in the night sky. The month of July brings us warm nights with many exciting stars, planets, and deep-sky objects to discover.

One of the best constellations to see in the July sky is Hercules. Many have heard the name, however they may not know it is the fifth-largest constellation, and it fills 1,225 square degrees in the sky. In Greek mythology Hercules was the son of Zeus and Alcmene. Hera (Zeus' wife) was angry about his affair and promised eternal misery for Hercules. After completely driving him mad and causing him to kill his wife and children he asked for atonement. As Hercules' atonement, he had to serve king Eurystheus and had to complete twelve labors, which he is best known for. He is often depicted kneeling with his right hand raised holding a club. Alpha Herculis is Hercules' head while the Keystone is his torso. The Keystone is made up of the bright stars Pi, Eta, Zeta and Epsilon Herculis. When looking for the constellation in the sky its stars are dim however it is quite easy to find. Hercules is bordered by many other constellations, to the north is Draco, to the south, Ophiuchus. The

crown Corona Borealis also shines near the two adjacent keystone trapezoids of Hercules.

Beyond stars, Hercules also includes deep-sky objects. One intriguing deep-sky object in Hercules is Messier 13 (M13) also known as the Hercules Globular Cluster. It is one of the most illuminated star clusters in the northern hemisphere. However, you will need binoculars to see it.

The next full moon occurs on July 9, when the sun and moon will both be located on opposite sides of the Earth.

Then on July 23 the moon will begin its next lunar cycle, and the dark skies will allow us to see star clusters and galaxies with no moonlight interference. You may wonder why we have such dark skies with the new moon. During the time of the new moon the night skies are especially dark and ideal for star viewing because the moon is on the same side of the Earth as the Sun. We see no moon at all, and then gradually each night the moon's crescent grows larger until it is again fully illuminated by the sun.

Mark your calendars for July 29 and 30, bring a few friends, and go out to see the Delta Aquarids Meteor shower. This meteor shower goes on from July 12 to August 23. However July 29 and 30 this year are the main days of this meteor shower. The shower can peak with

up to 20 meteors in an hour! The shower occurs due to the debris left behind by the two comets Marsden and Kracht. The best viewing times are after midnight and before dawn.

Planets are also a great thing to spot in the night sky. Elusive Mercury will be visible in the west just after sunset, and on July 30, Mercury reaches its greatest eastern elongation from the sun. This is the best time to see Mercury because it will be at its highest point above the horizon. Jupiter and Saturn will also continue to be bright night-sky objects.

If you are interested in joining the community in viewing the night sky, the Sisters Astronomy Club will be leading the next Stars Over Sisters night sky tour with telescopes and a short presentation on Saturday, July 15 starting in the classroom of Sisters Park & Recreation District building at 9 p.m., and then moving to the sidewalk west of the high school for night-sky viewing.



STA to 'Toast the Trails'

The Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) invites the Sisters community to join them for a Toast the Trails event at Cascade Street Distillery's tasting room on Thursday, July 6, at 6 p.m. Come and raise a glass to the arrival of summer and another awesome season of enjoying Sisters' trail system.

Cascade Street Distillery is partnering with STA to host the event. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to sample some exceptional liquor and support the organization that keeps your trails in tip-top shape for hiking, biking, or horseback riding.

Distillery owners and siblings, Nick and Katie Beasley, pride themselves on creating handcrafted spirits, made with locally sourced ingredients. They have ingrained themselves in the community in more ways than one. Nick serves on the board of directors of the Sisters Area

Chamber of Commerce, they restored an iconic barn to create their distilling operation, and they donate product to support local nonprofit organizations.

STA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect people and communities to each other and their natural surroundings. The organization maintains the Peterson Ridge Trail System, produces a free trails map, hosts an annual speaker series, and supports trail-related activities and events throughout the year. STA relies on memberships, donations and Toast the Trails fundraising events to support its work.

Tickets for the event are \$20 and include a cocktail and light hors d'oeuvres. Tickets can be purchased at www.sisterstrails.org or at the door.

For tickets or information about Sisters Trails Alliance, visit www.sisterstrails.org.

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4 Steps to Secure the Next Chapter of Life

One challenge of living a good life is learning how to balance the realities of today with what lies ahead. In other words, it's important to live in the present, yet wise to also plan for the future. Change is always around the corner, whether of our own making or due to the course of time. You owe it to your future self to consider what you'd like the next chapter of your life to be. Here are four ways to constructively think ahead.

1. Be intentional. Take time to articulate what you hope to experience in the next phase of your life. Whether you envision your future to include starting your own business, moving to a new job or new career, dedicating more time to volunteer work or entering into a secure retirement — it's all good. The more detailed you can be, the better. There's something empowering and motivating about naming your goals and claiming them for yourself. You only have one life, so give yourself the opportunity to reach for the experiences that will be most meaningful to you and bring you a sense of fulfillment that money can't buy.

2. Make saving an ongoing priority. When change comes along, it's easier to take a leap of faith with a financial safety net in place. Regular contributions to savings in various forms — bank accounts, Certificates of Deposit, IRAs and employer-sponsored retirement plans, mutual funds, stocks and bonds — all can help you weather potential financial hiccups or storms that may arise, not to mention their importance for the day your working and earning life comes to a close. Make saving a regular activity and turn it into muscle memory that you'll be more likely to flex in the event of a windfall.

3. Stay covered. Insurance is a product we all should have, yet hope we never have to use. Your insurance needs will change over time, making it especially important to periodically review your coverage levels. Homeowner's, auto and even health insurance are required by law, but don't stop there. Disability and life insurance policies, as well as annuities designed to provide a reliable income stream, may give you peace of mind that you and your loved ones can have financial security if the unexpected occurs. A will and health directives are also helpful documents that can make life easier under difficult circumstances.

4. Establish a solid plan. Change can be scary, but it also is what keeps life interesting and exciting. You can give yourself a better chance of succeeding in the next phase of life by establishing financial guardrails. With a well-defined path to help guide saving and investing, you will have a clear framework for your financial life that also reflects your personal mission. Work with a qualified financial advisor to create a savings and retirement plan designed to help you reach your goals at all of the stages of life. Once your plan is in place, revisit it on a regular basis with your advisor to ensure it takes your changing life circumstances and needs into account.

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