

Stars over Sisters

By Paola Mendoza
Correspondent

Though Auriga, The Charioteer, isn't the most recognizable constellation in the sky, it is one of the bigger ones. It is the 21st largest constellation in the sky, occupying 657 square degrees of the celestial sphere. This star pattern is well up in the northeastern sky in the early evenings during January, and is nearly overhead at 10 p.m. local time by mid-month. Auriga is bordered by Camelopardalis to the north, Lynx to the east, Taurus and Gemini to the south, and Perseus to the west.

Auriga's brightest star is Capella, sixth brightest of all the fixed luminaries in our sky. Although it appears to be a single star to the naked eye, Capella consists of a quadruple star system organized in two binary pairs. These stars are so close to one another that not even the largest telescope on earth can separate them; their existence is derived through spectroscopic analysis. Capella is 42.2 light-years away and shines at a magnitude of 0.08.

Three of the finest open star clusters in the sky are found in Auriga, and all have Messier designations. In order of decreasing brightness, they are M37, M36 and M38. Besides being the brightest of the three clusters, M37 is also the richest. Nineteenth-century astronomer William Henry Smyth, officer of the Royal Navy, described M37 as follows: "A magnificent object, with whole field being strewed as it were with sparkling gold dust...it resolves into infinitely minute points of lucid light..." The cluster is estimated to be no older than 550 million years and lies at a distance of some 4,511 light-years.

Sometimes referred to as the Pinwheel Cluster, M36 is a much younger object (25 million years old) than M37; its distance is about 4,340 light-years. Age-wise, M38 falls between M36 and M37, believed to be about 250 million years old and located approximately 3,480 light-years away. All three of these objects are invisible to the naked eye and require optical aid to be seen.

In certain accounts of sky lore, Auriga is referred to as Myrtilus, who was the son of Hermes and charioteer of Oenomaus, king of Pisa in Greece. The king had a daughter, Hippodamia, who attracted many suitors, but in order for them to win



PHOTO BY EMIL IVANOV

M37 is a rich open star cluster located 4,511 light-years away in the constellation of Auriga.

her hand in marriage they had to defeat Oenomaus in a chariot race. The king had already killed eighteen suitors because he was fearful of a prophecy that claimed he would be killed by his son-in-law. But when Pelops, son of Tantalus, entered the race, the gods decided to intervene. Pelops was given a golden chariot that would be pulled by a winged golden horse from Poseidon. To further ensure victory, Pelops arranged for Myrtilus to tamper with the wheels of the king's chariot in exchange for favors

involving his future wife. When the wheels came off his chariot during the race, Oenomaus was dragged to his death, thus allowing Pelops and Hippodamia to marry. But Pelops reneged on his part of the bargain, killing Myrtilus instead by throwing him into the sea. His father Hermes then placed him among the stars as Auriga.

At 11:48 p.m. on January 4, the earth will reach perihelion, its closest approach to the sun, at 91,398,199

See STARS on page 23

Two Outlaws earn silver on the mat

Two Outlaws got silver medals for Christmas.

The Outlaws wrestling team took 11 wrestlers to the Adrian Irwin Wrestling Tournament at Mountain View High School December 21-22. Leading the team scores at the end was Mountain View High with 453.5 points, Burns High was second with 220.0 points, La Pine took third with 208 points, Nyssa High earned fourth with 193.5 and fifth was Ridgeview with 183.5. The Outlaws ended in ninth place with 94.5 points.

"The Outlaws had a great first day at the tournament,

Head Coach John Downs told *The Nugget*. "Every Outlaw wrestler was considered varsity and wrestled in the varsity competition, even if we had two in a weight class. Everyone was able to earn their way to the second day of competition. This doesn't happen very often when a team can accomplish having everyone still in the tournament on the second day. The team wrestled very hard and we had some great matches."

The Outlaws had two wrestlers in the 138-pound weight class, sophomore

See WRESTLE on page 18

CORK CELLARS
WINE & BISTRO

Tasty THURSDAY
Thurs., Jan. 2, 5 to 7 p.m.

LIVE MUSIC
Sat., Jan. 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cuppa Joe

391 W. Cascade Ave. | 541-549-2675
corkcellarswinebistro.com

Quality Truck-mounted CARPET CLEANING
Quality Cleaning 16 years in Sisters!
Reasonable Prices — Credit Cards Accepted —

ENVIROTECH
541-771-5048
Licensed • Bonded • Insured • CCB#181062
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL

Dr. Thomas R. Rheuben
General, Cosmetic, Implant and Family Dentistry
~ Your Dentist in Sisters Since 1993 ~
We are here to help you smile with confidence!
541-549-0109 | 304 W. Adams Ave. | Sisters

DID YOU KNOW? PLASTIC BAGS ARE BANNED IN OREGON AS OF JANUARY 2020.

PAPER OR PLASTIC? NEITHER!

BYO BAG

Rethink about it! Why bring your own? Lots of reasons! Your own bag or basket is much sturdier than grocery store bags, you'll keep plastic bags out of our environment and you'll be conserving forest products. Win, win, win. Learn more on our website!

RethinkWasteProject.org
an environmental center program

RETHINK WASTE

PREVENT DIABETES CENTRAL OREGON PRESENTS:

WEIGH-IN SISTERS 2020

In this free year long program you will learn how to eat healthy, be active, lose weight, and prevent disease!

WELCOME SESSIONS
JANUARY 9, 12:00-1:00 PM
JANUARY 23, 5:30-6:30 PM
SISTERS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Prevent Diabetes CENTRAL OREGON
Get Active | Lose Weight | Feel Great

For more information and to sign up for the program, call Kylie Loving today! 541-447-3260

When you don't really want to get up...

Smart Shades raise or lower with a push of a button, a tap on a mobile device, or Alexa, Siri, or Google Assistant can take care of it — *whether you are home or not.*

Shades can also be scheduled to move as desired to optimize your home's lighting.

HunterDouglas PowerView® Motorization
SMART SHADES FOR THE CONNECTED HOME

Save on Smart Shades through Sept. 9, 2019. Come see Shelly, our in-house blind and shade expert, for more details

Visit our Sisters showroom at 141 E. Cascade Ave. #202
541-588-6201
or visit our website **BestVueBlinds.com**

BESTVUE BLINDS
— A division of Lakeview Millworks —