

Stars over Sisters

By Paola Mendoza
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In July the warmer weather and increasingly longer nights combine to make stargazing a perfect activity with which to spend your time. Now, if we could only find a way to start observing earlier in the evening and get to bed at a more reasonable hour, it would be ideal.

Of course, doing away with daylight saving time is the obvious solution, but that probably won't happen anytime soon.

One of the most recognizable constellations in the summer sky is Cygnus, the swan. It is the 16th-largest constellation in the sky, using up 804 square degrees of the celestial sphere. Appearing to fly along the Milky Way, the heavenly bird will be nearly overhead at midnight by mid-July.

Cygnus is bordered by Cepheus to the north, Lyra to the west, Vulpecula to the south, and Lacerta to the east. Its brightest star is Deneb, a blue-white supergiant that is the 19th-brightest star in our sky lying about 1,550 light-years from Earth. Deneb marks the swan's tail while Albireo denotes its head.

But Cygnus is also known as the Northern Cross. In this case Deneb is the top of the cross while Albireo represents its base. It is interesting to note that the cross seems to stand upright just above the northwestern horizon near Christmas time.

Deneb is the northernmost member of the Summer Triangle. The other two stars that complete the triangle are Vega in Lyra and Altair in Aquila. Besides serving as the head of the swan or the bottom of the cross, Albireo is regarded by many observers as one of the finest and most colorful double stars in the heavens.

Although Cygnus contains only two Messier objects (open star clusters M29 and M39), the constellation is rich with many more deep-sky treasures. One of the most prominent of these is NGC 7000, the North America Nebula, so named because of its striking resemblance to the continent of North America. Classified as an emission nebula, this region of interstellar gas and dust is in the process of forming thousands of new stars. The nebula is large, spanning an area of the sky equal to more than four times the

size of the full moon and lies about 1,400 light-years from Earth.

There are many myths about Cygnus and one of the most popular has to do with Leda, wife of King Tyndareus, and the god Zeus. Zeus became infatuated with Leda so, in order to seduce her, he would turn himself into a swan. Leda eventually bore two sets of twins. One set, fathered by Zeus, were Pollux and Helen of Troy, who were immortal. The mortal twins, Castor and Clytemnestra, were born of the union between Leda and her husband King Tyndareus.

On July 4 the earth will reach the point in its orbit that is farthest from the sun, known as aphelion. At that time our home planet and the sun will be 94.5 million miles apart.

The two largest gas giants in our solar system officially become evening objects this month when they reach opposition: July 14 for Jupiter and July 20 for Saturn. When the earth is directly between a superior planet and the sun (opposition), that planet can be seen all night, from dusk until dawn the next morning. Both Jupiter and Saturn will rise earlier as the summer



PHOTO COURTESY NASA/IGNACIO RICO GUALDA

The North America Nebula (so name because of its resemblance to the continent that bears its name) is an emission nebula in the constellation of Cygnus.

Reopening moves the needle on labor market

The movement into Phase 1 of COVID-19 reopening in Central Oregon moved the needle for the regional labor market. The unemployment rate improved slightly in May as many workers on temporary layoff began getting called back to work.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Deschutes County dropped to 16.3 percent in May, down from 18.3 percent in April. An additional 3,068 workers were employed in May compared with April. The rate remains significantly higher than this time last year (3.9 percent).

Deschutes County added 1,680 jobs in May on a seasonally adjusted basis. Roughly 11 percent of the jobs that were lost in April were added back in May.

Total nonfarm employment remains down by 13.9 percent from this time last year (-12,120 jobs). The largest losses continue to be seen in leisure and hospitality, down 6,160 from last year (-45.6 percent). Other hard-hit sectors include professional and business services (-1,470 jobs); government (-1,460 jobs); health services (-810 jobs); and retail trade (-750 jobs).

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