

Museum Hopping

The Real Native Oregonians

Since 1979, the University of Oregon Museum of Natural History has been putting together high-quality traveling exhibits on Oregon Native cultures, and sending them on tour to places like The Dalles, Klamath Falls, Bend and Lakeview. One of the exhibits, *Living Traditions: Native Basketry of Oregon*, showed in Springfield last year; and the Museum's latest effort, of special interest to area residents, can be seen this summer in two Eugene locations. *The Kalapuya: Native Peoples of the Willamette Valley*, on display at the University of Oregon Library through July 8, will open at WISTEC on July 11 for a summer-long showing.

The Kalapuya were the Native people who lived peacefully in the Willamette Valley for thousands of years. Although white settlers' diseases and forced acculturation all but eliminated the Kalapuya and their heritage, traces of their history remain. The archaeological record is well-documented in the exhibit; artifact-lovers will find a variety of tools, weapons, utensils and ornaments.

From our industrialized perspective, we tend to view spear points and baskets as exotic oddities. It's helpful to guess at how the objects were made, where the raw materials came from, and how each was used. In this way, we can imagine the Kalapuya as people not unlike ourselves—contending with perennial human problems, experiencing wet winters and sunny summers, raising kids, and creating a way of life that endured for thousands of years.

When Euroamerican settlers arrived, things changed quickly for the Native peoples of the Willamette Valley—and not for the better. A few individuals recorded language, stories and traditions of the Kalapuya. Some intriguing examples are included in the exhibit.

Contrary to popular wisdom, the Kalapuya didn't die out. Many residents of Lane County claim Kalapuya descent. The Native tradition in this area is strong, and growing. A number of Native consultants have participated in *The Kalapuya*, as in all of the traveling exhibits on Native cultures.

The Kalapuya: Native Peoples of the Willamette Valley was organized by Betsy Hennings, Traveling Exhibit Coordinator at the U of O Museum of Natural History. Jan Coleman designed the exhibit.

See *The Kalapuya* at WISTEC, 2300 Centennial Blvd. (next to Autzen Stadium). WISTEC is open from 12:00 to 5:00 Tuesday through Sunday. Admission is \$2.00 for adults and 75¢ for children.

—Alice Carnes,
Executive Director
WISTEC

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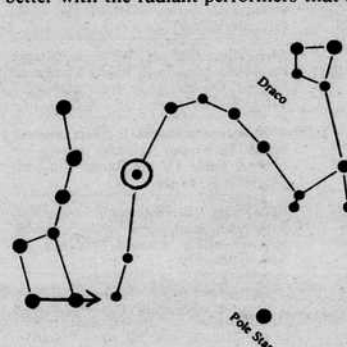
What's Happening in the Sky June 23-July 7

With the light of over a million trillion stars penetrating the dark of space, we are fortunate in being able to perceive "up close" our own representative sample. Like a maple tree next to a window with a vast forest barely visible beyond it, our Sun gives us a pattern with which to understand the extended family of stars. And an astounding pattern it is!

Initially, of course, the Sun's size and distance from us must be determined, which is no simple task. For example, when the Greek Heraclitus tried to figure it out in the 6th century B.C., he declared that the Sun could be no more than about twelve inches in diameter. With even greater "precision," Anaxagoras refined the measurement 100 years later by suggesting that the Sun was a flaming rock 35 miles wide. In actuality, the Sun's waistline is 864,000 miles (determined in 1961 by bouncing radar waves off Venus and then performing calculations), or about three and a half times the separation between Earth and Moon, and its distance from us is an average 92.9 million miles. Yet put in terms of stellar size, the Sun's tremendous girth is considered just "average." Only if it were 10 times larger would it be called a sub-giant star; if 100 or 1000 times wider, it would rank as a "giant" or "super-giant," respectively.

Of profound interest is the mechanism by which the Sun and the other beacons of the night generate power. Thanks to Einstein and his insights, we now know that matter and energy are ultimately the same thing, with a little bit of matter containing an immense amount of energy. A simple comparison might help put the Sun's potency in perspective. By the mid-1960's mankind was using an amount of energy every year equal to the complete conversion of 22 pounds of matter into energy. Yet every second the Sun is transforming almost five million tons of matter directly into its radiant equivalent. This nearby celestial furnace demonstrates the basic process found in all the stars of night; indeed, about 99% of the stars visible to the naked eye are actually even more luminous than the Sun.

Especially now that the night has been reborn and is gradually getting longer each day (as of the Summer Solstice on June 21st), it's a good time to appreciate and utilize "our star" more fully. Then, when the stellar parade really comes through town, we can identify a little better with the radiant performers that are ultimately so far away.



Winding between the pole star Polaris and the Big Dipper is the constellation Draco the Dragon. This ultimate serpent is circumpolar from the Pacific Northwest, which means that it never sets below the horizon. Graced with numerous galaxies, it has also marked, in times past, the north celestial pole. Specifically, the star Thuban (circled on the adjoining map) was the pole star in 2100 B.C. and was used to illuminate the Descending Passage of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh.

As such it was particularly significant to the ancient Egyptians. To find Draco, note the path from the last two stars of the Dipper (called "The Pointers") to the current pole star Polaris. Between these is the tail of Draco, which proceeds to unravel up to the Dragon's lozenge-shaped head. Incidentally, the stars you see on the map should be easily visible on any clear dark night through the year.

This Saturday morning, June 25th, the heavens and earth will be bathed in silver light and long shadows as the Moon becomes full at 1:33 AM. If you can't sleep (which is a distinct possibility), a moon-watch might be the antidote. Through the next two weeks brilliant white Venus sets ever nearer in due west and in a telescope is becoming a thin crescent. It finally sinks from view at almost 11:15 PM after outshining everything but the Moon itself. Located near the opposite horizon is Venus' dimmer twin in appearance, Jupiter. It's interesting to realize that Jupiter is nearly a star in its own right and radiates out twice as much heat as it receives from the Sun. Finally, ringed Saturn gleams yellow at about the same height in the sky as Jupiter, but to that planet's far right. Look for it as a very bright point of light just to the left of the prominent white star Spica. With a moment's observation of the southern horizon after sunset, this pairing of objects should be immediately apparent.

This Week's Terrestrial Eye-Opener (taken from the book, *The Human Body*): "The blood plasma and the lymph outside the circulatory system are strikingly similar to sea water. They contain four salts, sodium, calcium, potassium and magnesium, in much the same concentrations as the primordial seas in which life originated. Seventy per cent of our body weight consists of this saline fluid."

—Larry Deckman

Have you purchased your glow-in-the-dark star map yet? The poster measures 24x28", shows practically all the stars visible year-round from Eugene/Springfield, and costs only \$7. They are available from Larry Deckman or Sloan Heermance at 2406 Lawrence in Eugene. Call 343-7166 to get one!

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