



☆ * ○ ● Symbols For Stars In Order Of Brightness

bright planets now shine

by James Stokley

Adding to the display of brilliant stars January always brings, four of the five naked-eye planets are in the evening sky. But not all evening—and not all month.

Mars is low in the southwest in early evening, in the constellation of Aquarius, the water carrier. It sets about three hours after the sun.

And, in the closing few days of January, you may be able to catch a glimpse of Mercury low in the southwest at dusk, as it reaches a position farthest east of the sun. It will set before the sky is completely dark.

Neither of these planets is shown on the accompanying maps.

These depict the sky as it looks about 10:00 p.m., local time, on Jan. 1; an hour earlier at mid-month, and two hours earlier at the end.

But Jupiter is there—low in the east and just below Regulus in Leo, the lion, on the northern sky map. It has just risen. Later in the night it will shine more brilliantly, high in the south.

Saturn is considerably fainter, about the same brightness as Mars. It stands in the west near Pisces, the fishes.

To the south and southwest are the most prominent stars now visible. Brightest is Sirius in Canis Major, the larger dog. To the right and a little higher is the warrior, Orion.

Characteristic of this group are the three stars that form his belt. Betelgeuse is above the belt, Rigel below. Still higher in the south is Taurus, the bull. Aldebaran supposedly marks his eye.

Left of Orion, on a level slightly below Betelgeuse, stands the smaller dog, Canis Minor. Its brightest star is Procyon. Above are the twins, Gemini, with bright Pollux and Castor, a little fainter. And directly overhead is Auriga, the charioteer, with Capella.

Some other figures are conspicuous, even though they are formed of fainter stars. Eridanus, the river, to the right of Rigel, is an example. It extends farther in a north-south direction than any other constellation. Much of it is below the southern horizon and does not rise at our latitude. This includes Achernar, its brightest star. To the right of Eridanus is Cetus, the whale.

Overhead, just west of Auriga, stands Perseus, the mythological hero. The

star marked Algor is a famous variable; its light dims every few days as a darker companion moves in front. Cassiopeia, the queen, is below and Ursa Major, the larger bear, is in the northeast. Here are the seven stars that form the familiar Big Dipper.

One other naked-eye planet will be visible in the east in early morning during January. Venus, although moving nearer the sun, still rises about two hours ahead of it.

CELESTIAL TIMETABLE FOR JANUARY

Jan.	EST	
3	5:00 a.m.	Moon passes south of Mars
7	9:23 a.m.	Moon in first quarter
8	3:50 a.m.	Algor at minimum brightness
11	12:40 a.m.	Algor at minimum
13	9:30 p.m.	Algor at minimum
15	11:12 a.m.	Full moon
16	6:20 p.m.	Algor at minimum
22	2:38 p.m.	Moon in last quarter
24	7:00 p.m.	Moon nearest, distance 229,500 miles
25	4:49 a.m.	Occultation of Antares begins, visible in some areas
28	5:30 a.m.	Algor at minimum
29	11:30 a.m.	New moon
30	8:00 p.m.	Moon passes south of Mercury
	11:00 p.m.	Mercury farthest east of sun
31	2:20 a.m.	Algor at minimum



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