



# WESTMINSTER ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, INC. (WASI)



## WASI Update



WASI Update—June 2026

Contact the Secretary at [secretary@westminsterastro.org](mailto:secretary@westminsterastro.org)

Our **membership meeting** will be **June 10** at Bear Branch Nature Center.

Our **guest speaker** will be Dr. Demos Kazanas. Dr. Kazanas talk is titled “Cosmological Inflation: A Personal Perspective”. He will review briefly the standard cosmology and outline two of its fundamental problems, namely the horizon and flatness problems. He will discuss how cosmological inflation can provide a resolution to these along with some thoughts concerning the future of the universe.

**June 13** is our monthly planetarium show and **star party** at Bear Branch Nature Center. And the **member-only star party** there is **June 12-14**. The new moon is the 15th.

Our annual picnic will be Saturday August 1 at the pavilion at Bear Branch. It’s a potluck, so let us know what you’ll be brining by entering that data here: <https://westminsterastro.groups.io/g/main/table?id=37370&lv=&p=,,,20,0,0,0>

Check your membership card or your Night Sky Network (NSN) profile to see if your membership ends **6/30/2026**. If yes, then dues for renewals were due in **MAY**.

We’re looking for a volunteer to demo the use of our **Lunt solar scope** at the July meeting. Please let the secretary ([secretary@westminsterastro.org](mailto:secretary@westminsterastro.org)) know if you’re interested.

And we’re looking for volunteers to present at the August through December membership meetings about, well, anything of astronomy interest. Maybe meteor showers, demos of your equipment, etc. The sky is the limit (so to speak). Email Laurie to volunteer: [treasurer@westminsterastro.org](mailto:treasurer@westminsterastro.org).






NASA released new high res images of the Lunar ‘dark side’ captured by the Artemis crew...



# Outreach Events

WASI holds many events to introduce the public to the wonders of the night sky. We're always looking for members to help out with these. It's fun and who knows... you might encourage a youngster to become the next Carl Sagan. Questions? Email [president@westminsterastro.org](mailto:president@westminsterastro.org).

Here's this month's calendar. If you go to the calendar web page (<https://nightsky.ipl.nasa.gov/events/wasi/>) and click on an event it will give more details.

<div style="text-align: center;"> <span>&lt;</span> <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">June 2026</span> <span>&gt;</span> </div>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 31 <b>08:31 PM</b> Sunset	01	02	03	04	05	06
 07 <b>08:35 PM</b> Sunset	08	09	<b>07:00 PM</b> <a href="#">Meeting - open to public</a>	11	<b>Members' Observing</b>	<b>07:00 PM Star Party &amp; Planetarium</b>  <b>Members' Observing</b>
<b>Members' Observing</b> <b>08:39 PM</b> Sunset	 15	16	17	18	<b>Juneteenth</b>	<b>06:00 PM Milkhouse Star Party</b>  <b>08:30 PM SD Star Party</b>
<b>08:41 PM</b> Sunset	 22	23	24	25	26	27
<b>08:41 PM</b> Sunset	29	 30	01	02	03	04

## What's up in the June sky

Meteor shower – Lyrids from 6/10-6/21, peaking on early morning of 15 & 16. Remember the best viewing for meteor showers is between midnight and dawn. This is classified as a “moderate” meteor shower. There are also “minor” showers in several other constellations this month, all of which are the remnants of passing comets in our orbital path.

June 21 brings the Summer Solstice and longest day of the year.

## Astronomical League June Observing Challenge

There are 110 Messier objects, starting with M1, the Crab Nebula. Many of our favorite targets are part of this set, like M31 (Andromeda), M57 (the Ring Nebula), etc. But what about M102? No one is quite sure what object was cataloged as that “faint nebula.” The Astronomical League has an observing challenge where you can look at a group of candidate objects and make your own decision about which one was observed by Charles Messier and his colleague Pierre Méchain. You can find info about this award at <https://www.astroleague.org/al-observing-challenge-special-observing-award/> (scroll down to #16).

Observations must be done during June, and submissions sent by July 31.

## Resources

Have you checked out the resources on our webpage lately? There's a ton of useful astronomy data there. Go to [www.westminsterastro.org](http://www.westminsterastro.org) and click on the “Resources” tab.

<https://www.westminsterastro.org/astronomy-references/>



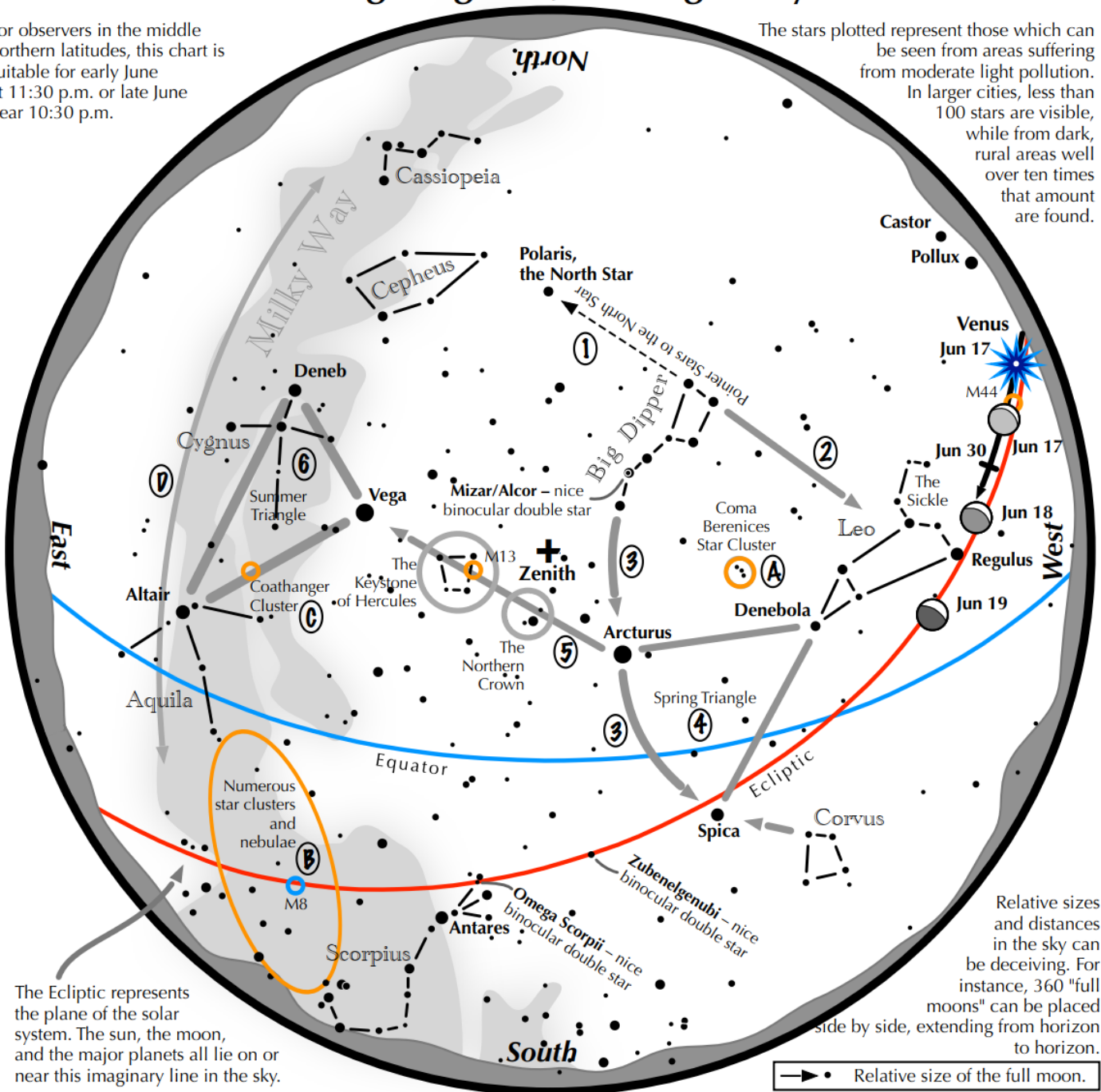
*WASI members getting trained on using the observatory by Jeff Burns and Chris Bennett. Photo by Jackie Donaldson.*

# Navigating the June Night Sky

2026

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for early June at 11:30 p.m. or late June near 10:30 p.m.

The stars plotted represent those which can be seen from areas suffering from moderate light pollution. In larger cities, less than 100 stars are visible, while from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



Relative sizes and distances in the sky can be deceiving. For instance, 360 "full moons" can be placed side by side, extending from horizon to horizon.

→ • Relative size of the full moon.

## Navigating the June night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Extend a line north from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes by Polaris, the North Star.
- 2 Draw another line in the opposite direction. It strikes the constellation Leo high in the west.
- 3 Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, the brightest star in the June evening sky, then Spica.
- 4 Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.
- 5 To the northeast of Arcturus shines another star of the same brightness, Vega. Draw a line from Arcturus to Vega. It first meets "The Northern Crown," then the "Keystone of Hercules." A dark sky is needed to see these two dim stellar configurations.
- 6 High in the east are the three bright stars of the Summer Triangle: Vega, Altair, and Deneb.

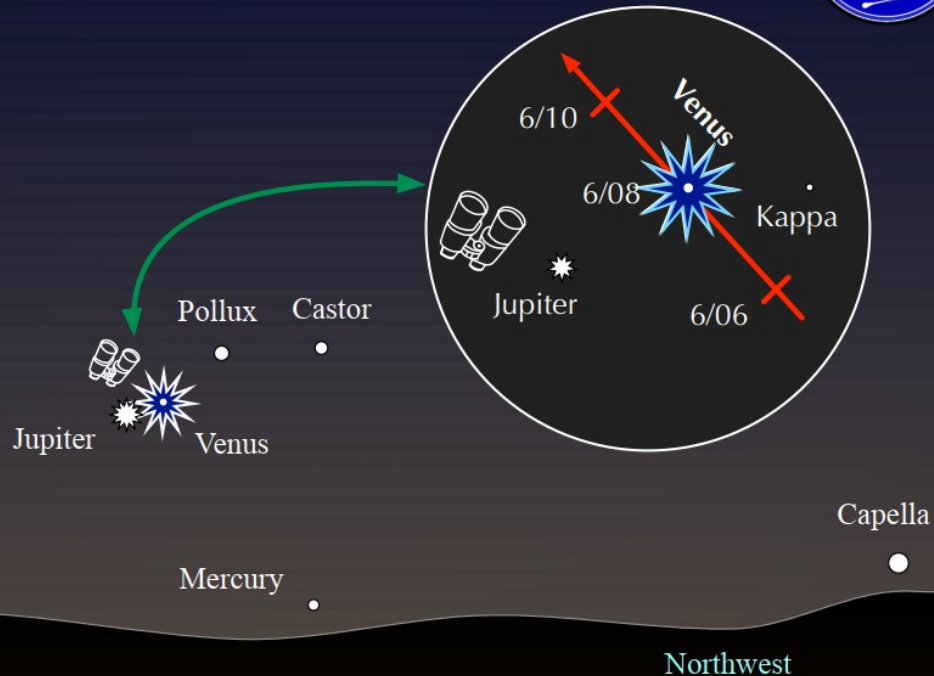
**Binocular Highlights**

- A: Between Denebola and the tip of the Big Dipper's handle, lie the stars of the Coma Berenices Star Cluster.
- B: Between the bright stars of Antares and Altair, hides an area containing many star clusters and nebulae.
- C: 40% of the way between Altair and Vega, twinkles the "Coathanger," a group of stars outlining a coathanger.
- D. Sweep along the Milky Way for an astounding number of faint glows and dark bays.



Astronomical League [www.astroleague.org/outreach](http://www.astroleague.org/outreach); duplication is allowed and encouraged for all free distribution.

Regulus



## If you can see only one celestial event this June, see this one.

### Brilliant Venus passes bright Jupiter

Look to the west-northwest 60 minutes after sunset in early June as the Venus/Jupiter gap narrows.

- On June 8, brilliant, unmistakable Venus lies slightly below and right of the lesser Jupiter.
- The next evening finds Venus having moved slightly above Jupiter.
- Then on succeeding evenings, Venus pulls above Jupiter, while the mighty planet drops toward the horizon.
- Enhance the view by using binoculars.
- All the while, the much dimmer Mercury lies close to the horizon in the bright twilight.

**End your day with this enchanting meet-up!**

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