



What's Up?

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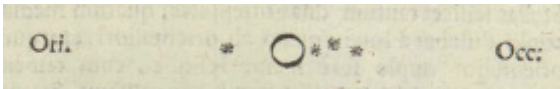
Hello! This is the first installment of what will (hopefully!) become a semi-regular feature in the *Express*. My goal with these pieces is to share my love of the night sky with you and talk about things to notice up there when the skies are clear. I used to volunteer at the Museum of Science, sharing astronomy with visitors. One of my ‘hooks’ to start a conversation with them was, “Hi there, can you tell me, was it clear or cloudy last night?” Most people had to really stop and think before answering. They could readily say if had been sunny or cloudy the previous day, but didn’t know about the nighttime conditions. I think that’s a shame. Especially for us Plymptonians, Halifaxians, and Kingstonians (and our surrounding ‘-ians’), we have a great resource in our dark night sky and can increase our enjoyment of it if we know a bit more about what’s up. These articles will be a mixture what to see and when to see it, and basic astronomy information that will make looking at our night sky more enjoyable and rewarding.

Okay, so...what’s up? Let’s start with some things that are easy (sorta) to find. You might have noticed that we had a Full Moon about a week and a half ago. If you’re an early riser, maybe you’ve been seeing the Moon when you get up. As the Moon moves in its orbit around the Earth, it will be out of our evening sky for the next week. That’s good! The Moon is so bright that it outshines other objects and makes them hard to see. You may know what the Big Dipper looks like.

It looks a lot like this:

If you look towards the Northwest (say after 9 p.m. or so), you can see it lying at an angle in the sky with the bowl at the bottom. Follow the handle of the Big Dipper (it makes an arc in the sky) and “arc to Arcturus”! By this I mean after you get to the end of the handle, keep going along the arc and the next really bright star you see is Arcturus. It’s a red giant star (can you see any color in it?). Now, if you’re looking at Arcturus, you’re looking towards the West-Southwest.

Now turn to your left a bit (you’ll be facing South now). Do you see a really bright object? That’s Jupiter! If you have a pair of binoculars or a telescope, check it out. See the four dots that are almost in a line (some on one side of Jupiter, some on the other – or maybe all on one side!)? They are the four largest moons of Jupiter (of the 79 moons of Jupiter that we know of). Galileo saw these through his telescope, too. It was the first time (that we know of) that anybody had ever seen them. Today, we know them as Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto – the Galilean Moons. Galileo named them the Medician Stars, after one of his former pupils, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo de’Medici. Galileo hoped that he might gain favor (and funding!) from the Grand Duke by bestowing this honor. If you are able to see the moons, keep watching. From night to night, notice how their positions change as they move in their orbits around the planet. If you can’t see all four, perhaps one or more are behind or right in front of Jupiter. It’s a fascinating celestial dance! Over the next two months, Jupiter will get lower and lower in the sky, so catch it while you can.



A drawing from Galileo’s book, Sidereus Nuncius (The Starry Messenger).

But wait! There’s more! Keep turning (now to the Southeast) and find Saturn. It’ll be the next bright ‘star’ you come to. Much dimmer than Jupiter, though. Binoculars (with a steady hand on them) will show you that it is more than just a disc. A small telescope will show you the stunning rings around the planet. It never ceases to captivate me. We’ll come back to Saturn in an upcoming article. All of these objects are shown here:



Why do we see these now and at the locations we do? I’ll talk about the motions of the planets in our sky later, but that’s it for now.

If you don’t want to wait until then to continue exploring the night sky with me, come to the Plympton Public Library on Tuesday, August 13th, at 6:30 p.m., where I’ll be leading an astronomical event – *Make the Night Sky Your Own*. I’ll share ideas and tips for becoming more familiar with the night sky.

Thanks for sharing your time with me for this first visit. I’ll be back...

Keep loking up!

Barry

You can contact me at: astroblog@comcast.net.
I’d love to hear what you think and how you make out finding the objects we’ve talked about!

Halifax BOS dog hearing

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no visible wounds such as scratches or punctures on the shih tzu. Spaziani said she brought her dog to the veterinarian following the incident due to “trouble in her left hind leg.” She further testified that the dog needed to be sedated in order to be examined and refused to leave the house for several days after the incident.

According to Spaziani, the veterinarian attributed the limping to a pulled muscle and sent the dog home on medication. Both dogs were up-to-date on their shots but neither was licensed in the town of Halifax although both have since obtained licenses.

A neighbor, Nancy Sheehan, testified as to Spaziani’s state after the incident saying, “To say the dog and Paula were shell-shocked, would be an understatement. She was shaking; the dog looked very distraught. She felt that the owner really didn’t give her her due as far as the fact that she was very dramatically upset.” Florio testified, “By the time I got across the street she had already picked up her dog, I leashed my dog, and asked her if the dog was okay and then I left.”

When asked by the board what she hoped to come from the hearing, Spaziani said that at the very least she would like Florio to compensate her for the veterinarian bill. Chairman Troy Garron, who said he used to breed shepherds and has dealt with dogs his whole life, shared his opinion saying, “I think it’s a fair asking that you pay the medical bill, but that’s just my opinion.”

Garron further stated that given that there are no reports of any prior incidences with Florio’s dog, he believes that if the dog were truly vicious, someone would have likely been seriously hurt.

Andrews asked McIntyre if she had anything to add. According to McIntyre, “There were no apparent injuries. Bailey, the Shi tzu, was in Paula’s arms when I went into the home; she did seem shaken up and as a dog owner myself, I’d be nervous too. I have a yorkie but I also have an old English bulldog so kind of both ends of the spectrum. When I went to see the pit bull she was very friendly with me. Both dogs were; they were great. Neither dog was something that I would be concerned about with people.”

Callahan reported observing the same things.

Millias said, “I don’t believe we have the authority to force anyone to pay any medical bills. Seelig responded that he “would have to check.”

The only other action agreed upon by the board

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