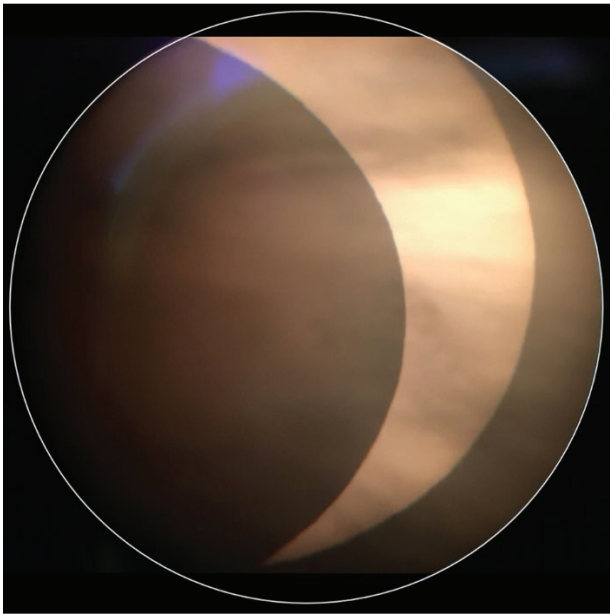


# WHAT'S UP?

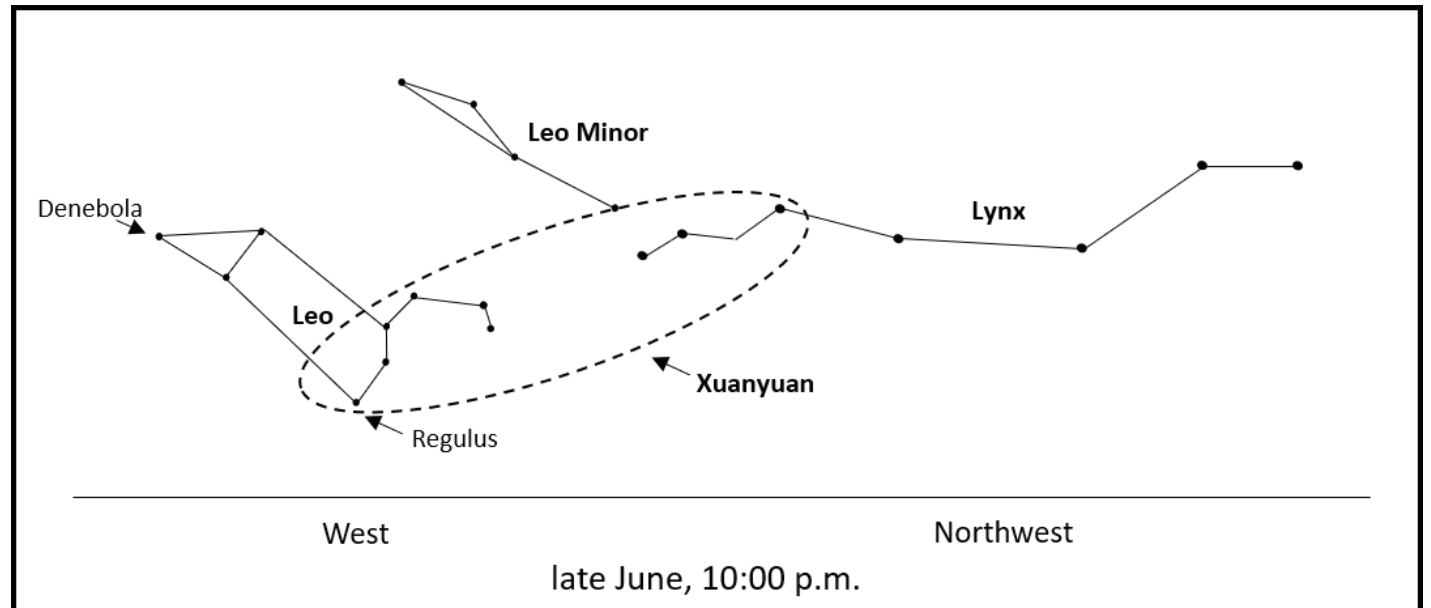
Hello again, and Happy Summer. Any luck seeing the partial solar eclipse on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>? We viewed it from the Plymouth waterfront with Paul and Brendan from the club (the *South Shore Astronomical Society* or, SSAS) and a couple of telescopes. After the Sun rose above thick clouds on the horizon, we were able to view the last 45 minutes of the event. We shared our views with others at the site – some who came for the eclipse and others there to run or to walk their dogs. It was a great morning. I grabbed a couple of quick pictures with my cell phone lined-up over the telescope's eyepiece. Not great photos but a record of the eclipse nonetheless! This picture shows the boundary of my eyepiece view (white circle), the Sun (the light, horn-shaped area), and the Moon (the dark circular part at the left) as it is moving away from having *almost* completely covered the disk of the Sun. The dark streaks are clouds in our atmosphere.



Continuing our constellation tour, this week we can add three more to our list. Facing west-northwest at 10:00 p.m. – yes, we now have to wait this long before darkness really sets in – we can find *Leo*, *the Lion* diving down towards the horizon. We've seen Leo on and off again over many installments and so the main stars of the lion's body are probably recognizable. The two shapes, a triangle and a backwards question mark, define the rear and front of the lion, respectively. The constellation's brightest star is *Regulus* or, *Cor Leonis* (the lion's heart). Regulus is at the southern end of the backwards question mark, also known as *the Sickle*. At the far end of the triangle at the rear of the lion, is the star *Denebola* (from the Arabic for "the lion's tail".) To the north of Leo we can find *Leo Minor*, *the Lion Cub* (though I think that the Latin translation is "*the Lesser Lion*".) Not a constellation defined by the ancients, Leo Minor came into being in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, introduced by the Polish astronomer Johannes Hevelius. With the brightest stars of Leo Minor being just 4<sup>th</sup> magnitude stars, this is an easily overlooked constellation. Stretching out along the northwest horizon, is *Lynx*, *the* (you guessed it..) *Lynx*. This group of stars is also dim and also one named by Hevelius. There is one star of the 3<sup>rd</sup> magnitude, but the rest are all 4<sup>th</sup> magnitude or dimmer. Because of its dim stars, Hevelius wrote that one needs the eyesight of a lynx in order to find it. An exaggeration, yes, but you get the picture.

Being "modern" constellations, Leo Minor and Lynx have no stories associated with them in Western culture. On the other hand, Leo, in addition to rating a spot in the sky because the lion is the king of beasts, has a story from mythology as well. It is the lion slain by Hercules because of its predatory behavior towards the inhabitants of Nemea. It was the first of Hercules' 12 labors. The Sickle asterism of Leo is also recognizable on Chinese star charts, though not as part of a lion. It was the western end of a line of stars stretching into Lynx. Comprising 17 stars, the group was known as *Xuanyuan*, *the Yellow Dragon*.

I mentioned that on the morning of the solar eclipse we were joined by two other members of the SSAS. I want to take a moment or two and encourage you to come to one of the club's outreach activities. In the summer months, you can find SSAS members, their telescopes, and their friendly personalities every Friday evening at the Scituate Lighthouse (weather permitting). At these sessions, SSAS members will show you the wonders of the heavens! Additionally, on Saturday nights



closest to the New Moon, club members often meet at Centennial Field in Norwell, MA to observe. While we are there mainly for our own observing interests, we invite the public to join us and view what we are viewing. For the Saturday sessions, send an email to [questions@ssastros.org](mailto:questions@ssastros.org) and we will try to determine if any members will be at the field on the day you are interested in. You can find out more about the SSAS and view some of the fantastic astrophotography done by the members at [www.ssastros.org](http://www.ssastros.org).

As always, you can reach me at [astroblog@comcast.net](mailto:astroblog@comcast.net) with any questions and comments you have.

This is What's Up? Installment #47.

Keep looking up!

*Barry*

<sup>1</sup> Ridpath, I. (2018). *Star tales*. Cambridge, The Lutterworth Press. My go-to source for constellation tales.