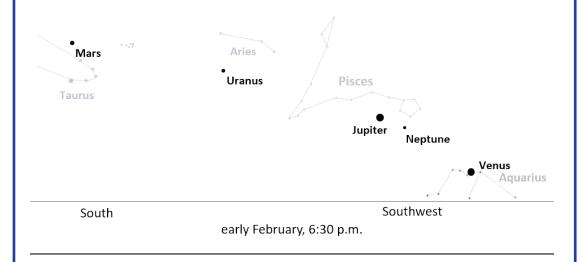


Hi. Have you had a chance to look for Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF) yet? We first spotted it on the 26th around midnight and have gone outside to look each clear night since. It's now up as soon as it gets dark out so you don't need to set an alarm clock for this one. However, the Moon is now in our sky after dark so that makes it a bit tougher to see. One note about the finder chart I gave you in the last installment – the dates marked on the comet's path are based on it being 0 hrs. Universal Coordinated Time for the given day. That means by the time we are going out to look, we are better off using the position indicated for the NEXT date. An interesting encounter occurs on February 10th through 11th. Comet C/2020 E3 will appear very near Mars on those nights and the Moon won't be up yet to wash it out. The two will appear to be about 2° apart – only about one finger's-width! Be sure to take a look! It's hard to show the exact positions of the planets on a 2-D diagram so I want to point out that Mars is in the south as shown, but is also actually almost overhead, about 70° above the horizon!



Planet Roundup: At the end of December, we could see all of the planets once it got dark. Now, as it gets dark (around 6:30 p.m.) we'll find that Saturn has slipped too close to the Sun for us to see it and that Mercury is now a "morning star". We still have Mars, Uranus, Jupiter, Neptune, and Venus strung across our southern hori-



zon though! As always, you'll need binoculars or a telescope to find Uranus and Neptune. As to the Moon, we'll see a February 5th, the 3Q on the 13th, the New Moon is on the 20th, and the next First Quarter Moon will be on the 27th.

And...here's the solution to our 2022 endof-the-year crossword puzzle!

You can reach me at astroblog@comcast. net with any questions and comments. This is *What's Up?* installment #66.

Barry