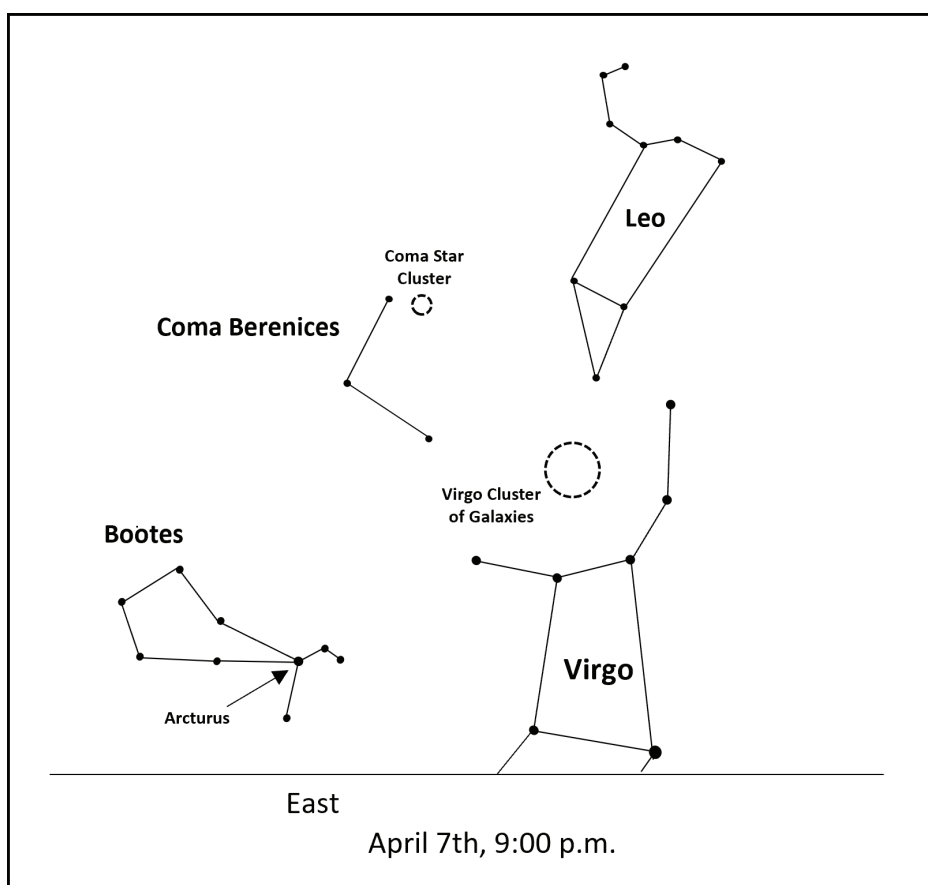


WHAT'S UP?

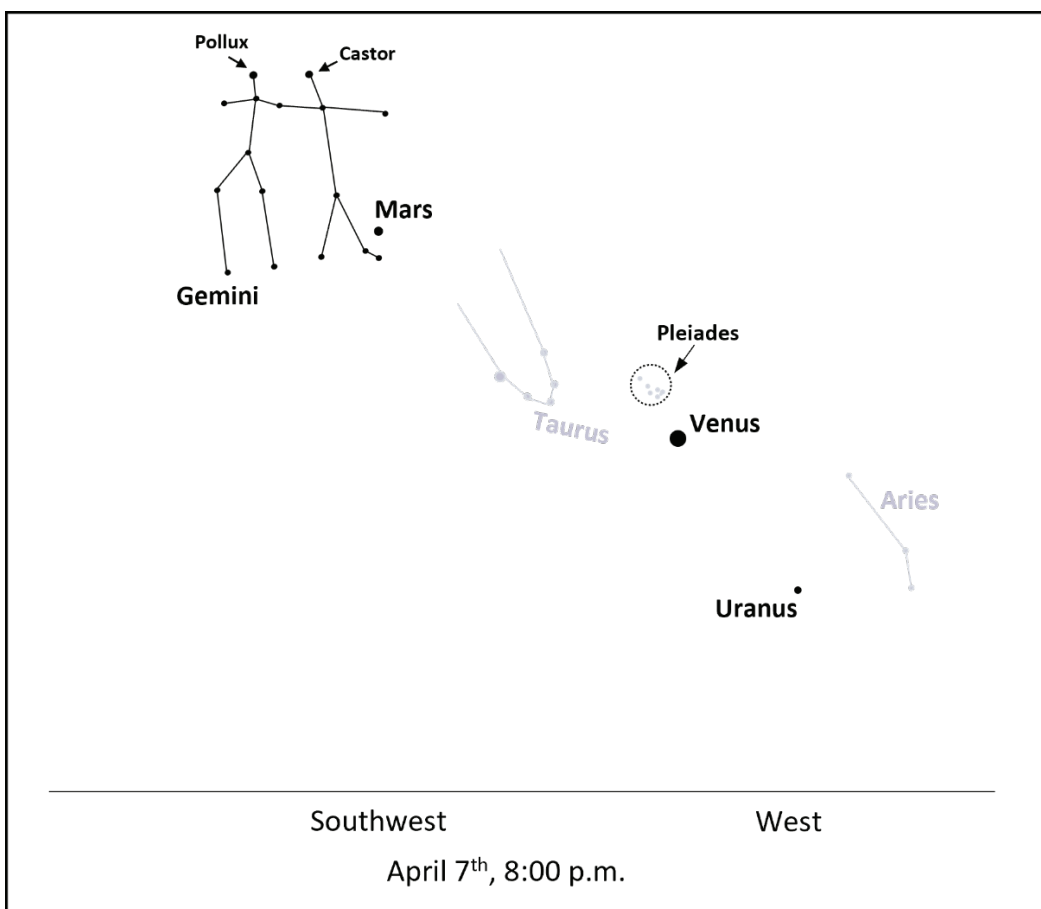
Hello. Now that we're running on Daylight Savings Time, we have to begin our night sky viewing a bit later than we have been. In this article, I have a couple of binocular objects for you to locate. The first is *Berenice's Hair*. Located in the constellation of the same name (*Coma Berenices*), this is an open star cluster containing about 40 bright(-ish) stars. About half-way up in the eastern sky and at a distance of about 280 light years, this group forms a faint mist of stars to the unaided eye. It might be tough to spot without binoculars because when we look east at night, we are looking right across the Plymouth waterfront area and that's very brightly lit. Binoculars should bring it out nicely though. You can find it to the left (north) of Leo the Lion's hindquarters and at one end of the right angle made from the three brightest stars in Coma Berenices. The other binocular object that I have for you is one we have visited before. It is a cluster of galaxies in the constellation *Virgo*. This is a group of about 1500 galaxies that are about 54 million light year away from us. You can use the chart that I've include to help you find both of these objects.



On March 20th, we logged-in to the Zoom presentation by Dr. Ziri Younsi that I told you about last time. He walked everyone through his work as a member of the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) collaboration. As you might have read or heard about, the group has now not only imaged the black hole in the galaxy M87, but has now imaged the black hole at the heart of OUR galaxy. Even though it is much closer than the object in M87, this black hole, known as Sag A* (sāj-ā-stār), it was much harder to image because of the intervening dust between us and the center of our galaxy. The work is an amazing combination of technology and brain-power.

Planet Roundup: Venus is now higher in the West after sunset and is 7 degrees below and to the right of the Pleiades star cluster. Another 7 degrees down and to the right will bring you to Uranus. Tiny Mercury can be found still a bit in the glow of the western sky less than one fist's width above the horizon. In case you've forgotten, here is a reminder about measuring angles across the sky. Make a fist with your hand and hold your fist out in front of you with your arm fully extended. The distance from your pinkie to your index finger makes an angle of about

8 degrees with your eye. If you put your thumb up on top of your index finger, the fist makes about a ten-degree angle. You can use this built-in measuring device to help you locate things in the sky. Mars is in the southwest, 65 degrees above the horizon and continuing its path through the stars of Gemini. Jupiter and Neptune are too close to the Sun to be viewed now. Saturn is now visible in the East before dawn and on April 16th, you can find it about 5 degrees directly above the rising Moon around 5:00 a.m. The Moon will be an ever-so-slender crescent and the pair should make a pretty sight. If you are using a telescope, you will note that Saturn's rings appear thinner than before. In about two years from now, as Saturn continues in its orbit around the Sun, we will be viewing the rings edge-on and because the rings are so thin, they will seem to disappear. Afterwards we'll start to see them again but will be seeing the other (southern) side of them! The next Full Moon is on April 6th (just after midnight on the 5th), the 3Q will be on the 13th, the New Moon on the 19th (just after midnight on the 20th), and the 1Q Moon occurs next on April 27th.



You can reach me at astroblog@comcast.net with any questions and comments. This is *What's Up?* installment #69.

Barry