



## August Sky is a Planetary Showcase

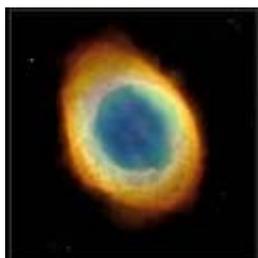


Looking for some great celestial sights? August is a great month for observing the planets. Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn are all visible in the West after sunset.

Jupiter will rise around midnight all month. Pull out your telescopes, because Uranus and Neptune are also visible in the East after midnight.

If you don't have a telescope, but want to see Uranus, Neptune and other great celestial objects, visit the Planetarium! There are also several amateur astronomy clubs in the area, like the Texas Astronomical Society in Dallas. Look them up on their [website](#)!

## Cosmic Rings



The sky is filled with wonders and beautiful objects. One of these beauties is a dead star in the constellation of Lyra, the harp.

The Ring Nebula is all that remains of a star, the size of our Sun, that died. Not all stars die the same way. Some explode as a supernova, others become black holes, and the rest become beautiful nebulae.

Stars like our Sun will die quietly,

## Perseid Meteor Shower



The Perseids is one of the best meteor showers to observe, producing up to 60 meteors per hour at its peak.

This year's shower should peak on the night of August 12th and the morning of the 13th, but you may be able to see some meteors any time from July 23rd - August 22nd. The crescent moon will be out of the way early, setting the stage for a potentially spectacular show. For the best viewing, look to the northeast after midnight. The meteors will all appear to come from the constellation Perseus.

For information about this and other sky events go the [Sea and Sky website](#).

## Mars as Big as the Moon?



It's that time of year again. Time for beautiful clear skies, hot weather, and the Mars hoax.

Every year, around August, the Planetarium email is inundated with this email hoax; that Mars will appear as large as the Moon this year. But, it is not going to happen.

This hoax was started in 2003, when Mars and Earth were at opposition to each

expanding and cooling until fusion stops, and all that remains of the star is the planet-sized core, called a white dwarf. Around the white dwarf is the beautiful cloud of gas and dust that used to be the star's atmosphere.

But don't let all this talk of our Sun's death get you down. Our Sun will continue to shine for another 5 billion years.

## Sunspots Return!



Sunspots are returning to the Sun! Last month, we featured an article about sunspots, and we are happy to report a few sunspots can now be seen on the surface.

The Sun has been coming out of its solar minimum, a time of few sunspots, for the past year, and it appears as though solar activity is picking up a bit.

Four sunspots are currently visible, but make sure never look at the sun directly! Properly filtered telescopes are a great way to see sunspots. Don't have a solar filter? Check out the latest images of sunspots on [SOHO's](#) website, and track the number of total sunspots at the [Spaceweather](#) website!

## Support Space Science Education: Become a Member!



Memberships are a great way to get involved with the Planetarium and help support our mission, and it comes with great benefits!

### Benefits Include:

other. In fact, they were closer than they had been in 60,000 years! But, it didn't appear large in our skies.

Mars is half the size of Earth, and an average of 46,500,000 miles away. Too far to ever see anything more than a bright "star" in the sky. This month you can see this bright "star" near the planets Venus and Saturn in the West after sunset.

## NASA Needs Your Help!



Help NASA decide where to explore next!

NASA will be simulating a lunar mission this September, and would like your help deciding where to explore. Two sites have been chosen as possible locations for testing the new Space Exploration Vehicle (SEV).

The SEV will allow astronauts to spend two weeks (or more) living, working, and traveling across different planets.

During D-RATS 2010, astronauts will use two SEV's to explore a lava flow and test science data collection, communications protocols, mission operations, and advanced technology. Vote now at the [Desert RATS website!](#)

## Membership Corner: Suzanne Montague



Suzanne Montague has worked at UT Arlington for more than 28 years and is currently the Vice President for Information Technology. She and her husband Robert, have been huge fans of the Planetarium since it opened. They were lucky enough to be founding

- Free tickets to the Planetarium
- Discount to our Star Store gift shop
- Free star maps
- Invitation to our annual "Reach for the Stars" event

### **Membership Categories:**

**Star** - \$40 - Receive 2 FREE tickets to each new show.

**Solar System** - \$60 - Receive 4 FREE tickets to each new show.

**Star Cluster** - \$100 - Receive 6 FREE tickets to each new show.

**Galaxy** - \$1000 - Receive 8 FREE tickets to each new show, plus a personalized chair in the Planetarium!

[Apply](#) online today!

members with their names on a plaque outside the front doors and a chair with their names and a sentimental thought engraved on it. She said, "It is such a pleasure to visit the planetarium with our children and grandchildren. This program has been such a wonderful addition to the city of Arlington. It shows how education and entertainment can be blended beautifully for visitors of all ages."

Because they are such strong supporters of the planetarium, Suzanne and Robert chose to create an endowment to help support its continued contribution to the community as well as the campus. This is one of the ways they hope to pay back the generousities of living in such a terrific city and working for such a great university. "We know the program will continue to grow, educate, entertain, and excite its visitors. We send our thanks to the College of Science and UT Arlington for providing such a terrific opportunity to so many fans."

