



First Light

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Mooncusser's 21st Century Almanac

by Jim Carlson

First Quarter – Mon. Mar. 06 at 15:17 EST

Full Moon – Tue. Mar. 14 at 18:36 EST

Last Quarter – Wed. Mar. 22 at 14:12 EST

New Moon – Wed. Mar. 29 at 05:17 EST

Object	Mar. 01 (EST)	Mar. 16 (EST)	Mar. 31 (EST)
Sun	R: 06:15 S: 17:31	05:51 17:48	05:25 18:05
Mercury	R: 06:41 S: 18:53	05:19 17:04	04:31 15:49
Venus	R: 03:54 S: 13:59	03:42 13:57	03:32 14:08
Moon	R: 07:10 S: 19:51	19:41 06:28	06:23 21:16
Mars	R: 09:45 S: 00:51	09:16 00:32	08:50 00:13
Jupiter	R: 23:05 S: 09:13	22:05 08:14	21:01 07:13
Saturn	R: 14:17 S: 04:53	13:14 03:52	12:14 02:52
Uranus	R: 06:20 S: 17:26	05:23 16:31	04:26 15:36
Neptune	R: 05:21 S: 15:31	04:23 14:34	03:25 13:38
Pluto	R: 01:45 S: 11:53	00:47 10:55	23:44 09:56

March 2006 Events (UT)

- 01 – Mercury 4° north of the Moon.
- 02 – Mercury stationary.
- 05 – Mercury at greatest ecliptic north latitude.
- 06 – Mars 3° south of the Moon.
- 10 – Saturn 4° south of the Moon.
- 12 – Mercury at inferior conjunction.
- 13 – Moon at apogee (252,449 miles).
- 14 – Full penumbral eclipse of the Moon in progress at 18:23 EST. Moonrise at 17:38 EST.
- 17 – Spica 0.3° south of the Moon.
- 19 – Jupiter 5° north of the Moon.
- 20 – Vernal equinox at 13:26 EST.
- 25 – Venus at greatest western elongation rising before the Sun. Venus 6° north of the Moon.
- 26 – Neptune 4° north of the Moon.
- 27 – Uranus 1.4° north of the Moon. Mercury 2° north of the Moon.
- 28 – Moon at perigee (223,176 miles).
- 29 – Double shadow transit of Jupiter in progress at 05:53 UT (00:53 EST). Total solar eclipse starting in Brazil, crossing northern Africa, central Asia, and ending in Mongolia.

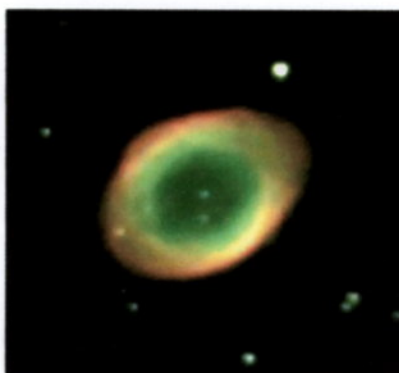
The Werner Schmidt Observatory

*Have you gazed on naked grandeur where
there's nothing else to gaze on,
Set pieces and drop-curtain scenes galore,
Big mountains heaved to heaven, which the
blinding sunsets blazon,
Black canyon where the rapids rip and roar?...*

"The Call of the Wild", Robert W. Service, 1907

Have you gazed on the great nebula in Orion with its bright stars and filaments of gas shining against the nothingness of black space? It makes quite a view when you're looking through the observatory's 16" main scope. Housed in a 12.5' Ash Dome, it's a Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain on an alt-azimuth fork mount. The scope and mount are controlled by a laptop computer in the dome room which in turn can be controlled by a computer in the ground level 20' x 18' warm room seven feet below the dome room.

That's right, by mounting the SBIG ST-8XE CCD camera on the scope, you can see those set pieces and scenes on the computer screen while sitting in the toasty comfort of the warm room (the warm room also serves as a meeting place and classroom for up to twenty people). And what set pieces and scenes they are. Neptune is a powder blue disk through a high power eyepiece. M13, the globular cluster in Hercules, shows individual stars right down to its compact center, just like a sparkling ball. Of course, both of those objects can be imaged in either black and white or color using the CCD camera. Observatory Director Jim Carlson has a beautiful color shot of the Ring Nebula, M57.



Jim Carlson

