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Astronomy Bulletin - The 1990-91 Winter Sky

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THE 1990-91 WINTER SKY
December 1990 through January 1991

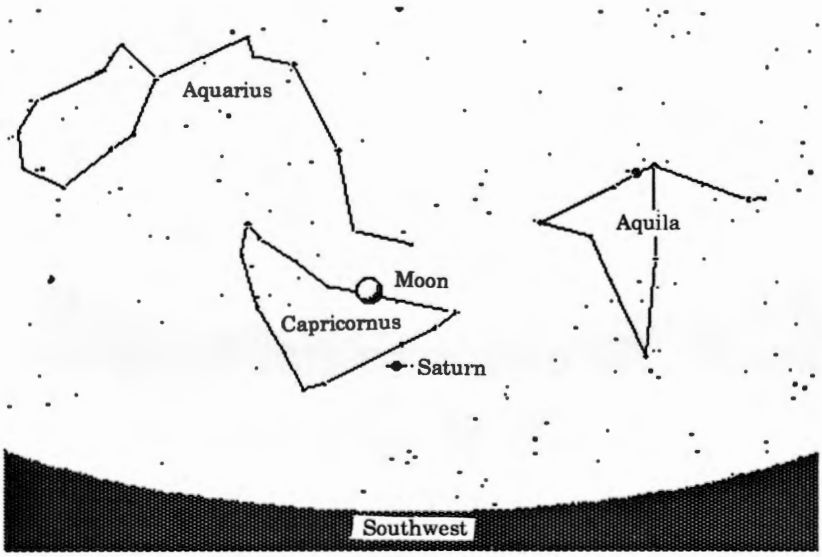

Figure 1
December 10, 1991
6:30 PM

Figure 1: On Tuesday, December 10, at 6:30 p.m., the Moon and *Saturn* will be visible in the evening sky. The Moon, located in the constellation Capricornus, is a thin crescent illuminated about 20 percent. It will be full on December 21. Saturn is also in the constellation Capricornus, approximately 7° below the Moon.

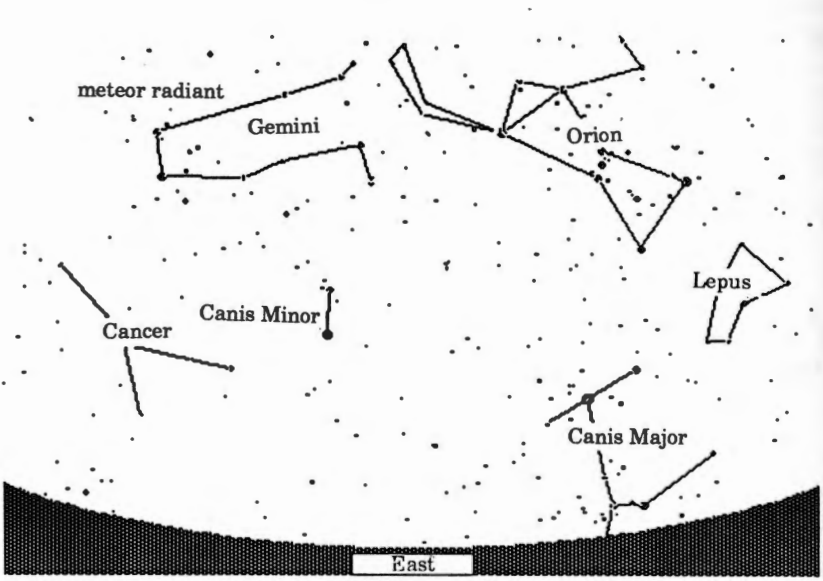

Figure 2
December 13, 1991
10:00 PM

Figure 2: On Friday, December 13, the Geminid meteor shower (so named because it appears to originate from the constellation Gemini) will be at its peak. The actual point from which these meteors appear to originate is marked on the diagram as "meteor radiant." Normally, this shower produces about 50 meteors per hour and lasts for three days, so it may be possible to see a significant number of Geminids a day before or after the peak. Although it is best to observe meteors under a dark and clear sky after midnight, one may be able to see them earlier, since the Moon is in the first quarter phase and sets at 11:45 p.m.

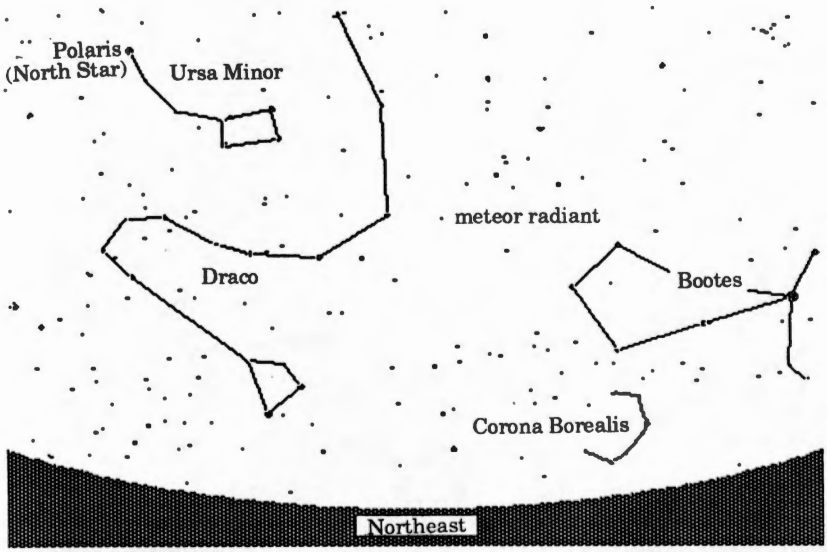

Figure 3
January 3, 1992
2:00 AM

Figure 3: Another meteor shower, the Quadrantids, which usually produces up to 40 meteors per hour, will be at its peak on January 3. The meteors of this shower appear to radiate from a point between the constellations Draco and Bootes. As mentioned before, one can most easily observe meteors after midnight under a dark and clear sky. The Moon is new and therefore will not be a factor.

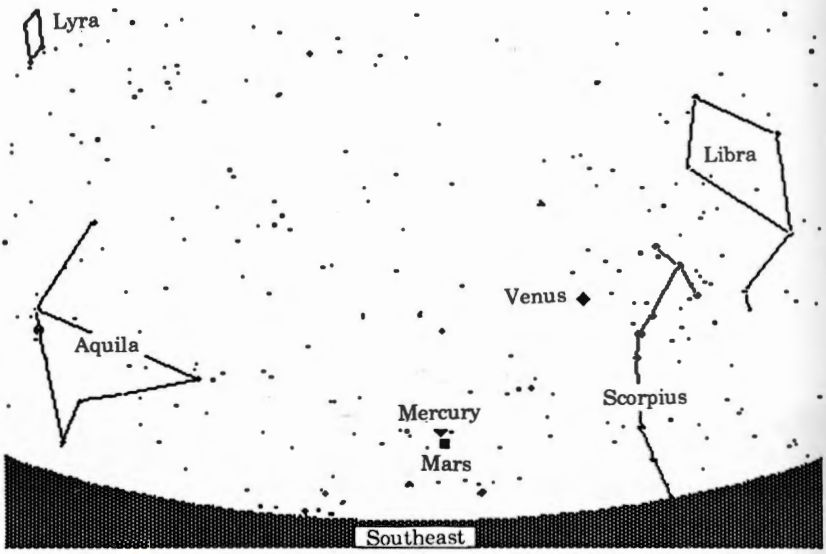

Figure 4
January 10, 1992
7:30 AM

Figure 4: Early in the morning on Friday, January 10, *Venus, Mercury* and *Mars* will be visible to the southeast at dawn. Venus is located about 21° above the horizon, with Mercury 19° to the lower left of Venus. Mars is located about 1° below Mercury. Because both Mercury and Mars are within 10° of the horizon and the sky is no longer dark, an unobstructed horizon is essential and a pair of binoculars may also be necessary for viewing.

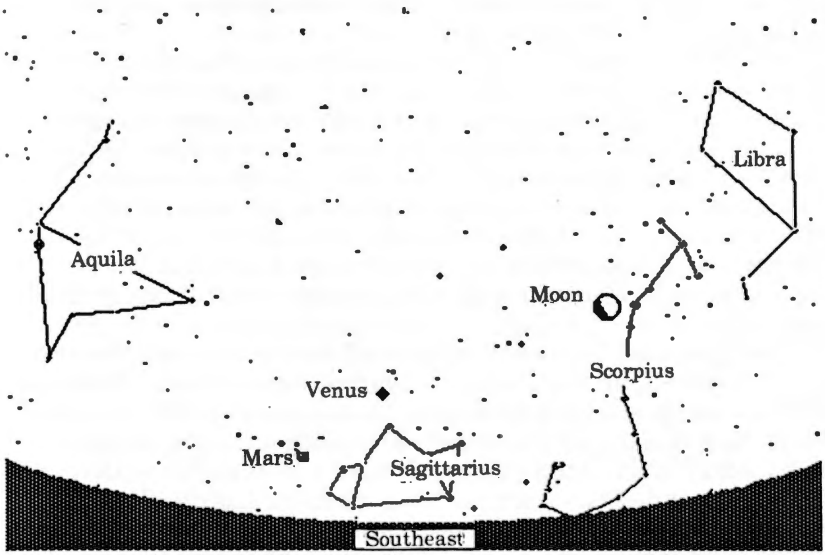

Figure 5
January 29, 1992
7:00 AM

Figure 5: Thirty minutes before sunrise on Wednesday, January 29, the Moon, *Venus* and *Mars* will be visible. Located in the constellation Scorpius, the Moon is an illuminated crescent (23 percent). Venus should be visible to the unaided eye approximately 13° above the horizon. Using a pair of binoculars may enable one to see Mars, located 6° above the horizon and 10° to the lower left of Venus.

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