

# THE SKY THIS MONTH

NOVEMBER 2007

## CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE CELESTIAL KIND

Several times a month, two (or more) bright objects in the sky will appear very close to each other. An example is the Moon looking close to a bright planet. Astronomers call these close encounters “conjunctions”.

The first conjunction in November occurs on the early morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> when the 34% crescent Moon appears half a degree from constellation Leo’s brightest star Regulus.

The next conjunction occurs on the early morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> when a slender 17% crescent Moon gets to within 4 degrees of the brilliant planet Venus. Seeing a Moon-Venus conjunction is always a treat!

The final conjunction in November occurs on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup>, when the nearly full Moon passes to within 2 degrees of the planet Mars.



The crescent Moon appears two degrees from the planet Venus. Image by Michael A. Earl.

## MARS TAKES THE REIGNS FROM JUPITER

Over the summer months Jupiter was in the spotlight as one of the brightest objects in the evening sky. Jupiter will soon disappear in the Sun's glow to reappear as an early morning object (like Venus and Saturn).

Meanwhile, Mars will replace Jupiter as the brightest planet in the evening sky. It has an unmistakable red-orange colour when viewed with the naked eye. Mars will be in the constellation Gemini for the entire month of November.

If you own a telescope, point it at Mars and explore its surface features!



The planet Mars viewed through a telescope. Image by Michael A. Earl.

## NOVEMBER'S PLANETS

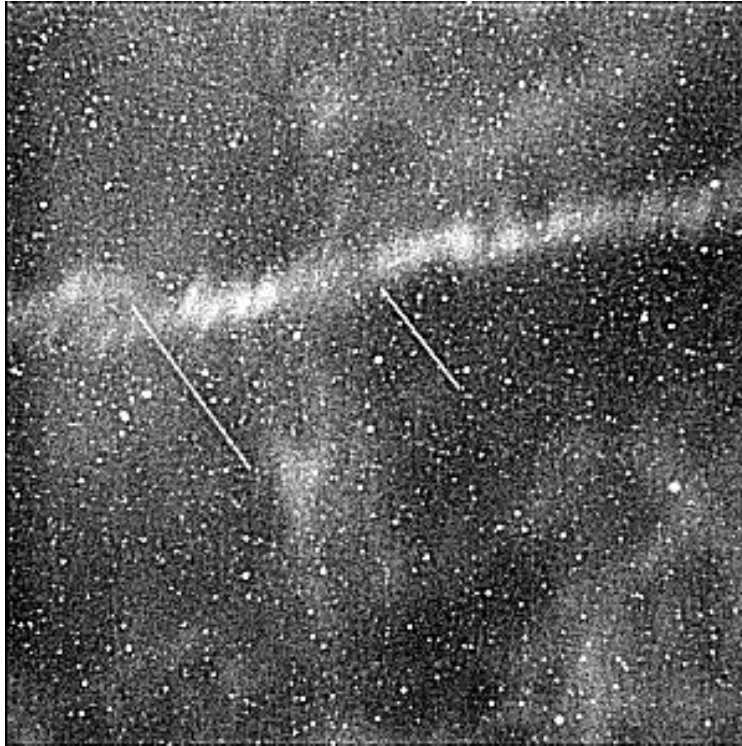
**Mercury** can be seen a half an hour before sunrise low in the eastern sky from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Venus** can be seen in dawn's eastern sky as a brilliant "star".

**Mars** rises at 9 p.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> and rises by 7 p.m. by month's end (see above).

**Jupiter** will be very low in the south-western sky just after sunset. By the end of the month, it will be very difficult to pick out in the twilight glow.

## THE SKY LAST MONTH – OCTOBER 2007



Two bright artificial satellites streak amongst the stellar background. The left satellite is a Soviet-era intelligence satellite. The right satellite is a Soviet-era meteorological satellite. To date, CASTOR has detected 1,764 satellites in 2007. See <http://www.castor2.ca> for more information. Image by Michael A. Earl.

### ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS

The Ottawa Astronomy Friends (OAFs) will be holding a public star party at the Mill of Kintail Gatehouse on Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> beginning at sunset. See detailed venue location maps by visiting <http://www.castor2.ca/parties/maps>.

The Mill of Kintail Conservation Area will be holding an astronomy course consisting of ten weekly classes beginning on Friday, March 28, 2008 and ending on Friday, May 30, 2008. For more information, see December's issue of "The Sky this Month".

## **THE SKY NEXT MONTH – DECEMBER 2007**

2007 Winter Solstice  
Geminid Meteor Shower  
Mars Gets Close!  
2008 Mill of Kintail Astronomy Course

Questions, comments, observations and/or images can be sent to  
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