Night sky from Pittsburgh, PA 9 pm EST mid-January

Look for future SKYWATCH dates, at CarnegieScienceCenter.org. Presented by PPG
What’s happening in January?

Beehive Cluster – M44
The Beehive open star cluster is a beauty to observe. It’s well placed for viewing on late January mornings before sunrise in the constellation Cancer. Look for it between Regulus in Leo and the stars of Gemini the Twins. This large bright open cluster, known from antiquity, was observed by Galileo through his new telescope. You can observe through binoculars. The blue white stars, looking like diamonds on black velvet, were added to the Messier catalog in 1769.

Image Credit NASA Stuart Heggie

Space Fact of the Month

What is the M for anyway?
As a boy Charles Messier witnessed the great comet of 1744. Inspired, he began his great search for comets, including the first predicted return of Halley’s comet. Messier became such a prolific comet hunter that King Louis XV nicknamed him the “Ferret of Comets.” But a lot of fuzzy celestial objects called nebulae, Latin for “clouds”, deterred his search. Messier compiled a list to distinguish comets from nebulae. The first nebula on his list was a supernova remnant called the Crab Nebula (M1). Ultimately the Messier Catalog would include 110 nebulae and star clusters.

Image Credit NASA Hubble

Star Chart FAQ

How do I use the star chart?
Hold it out in front of you with the direction you’re facing at the bottom of the chart. It works even better if you hold it above your head and look up at it.

Why are east and west switched?
They are only switched because you’re used to looking at maps of the ground. Hold it above your head, and you’ll see the directions line up just right.

Why isn’t the Moon on the star chart?
The chart covers a whole month. During this time, the Moon travels around the Earth, doing a full lap around the sky.

Join us for a show in the NEW Buhl Planetarium! An all new experience.

One giant leap from 4K to 8K resolution –
A brand new Sony projection system will utilize 10 projectors to create a seamless, synchronized True8K high resolution image—at least 8,000 pixels across every full 180-degree arc on the dome.

More options, more adventures — The new Evans & Sutherland Digistar 7 Software features an extensive library of planetary models, real-time 3D computer graphics, and a catalog that incorporates data from all over the world to generate the most accurate 3D atlas of the universe.

Buhl Planetarium visitors will be able to travel to other stars and even exoplanets and fly through 3D digital nebulae based on volumetric data.

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