

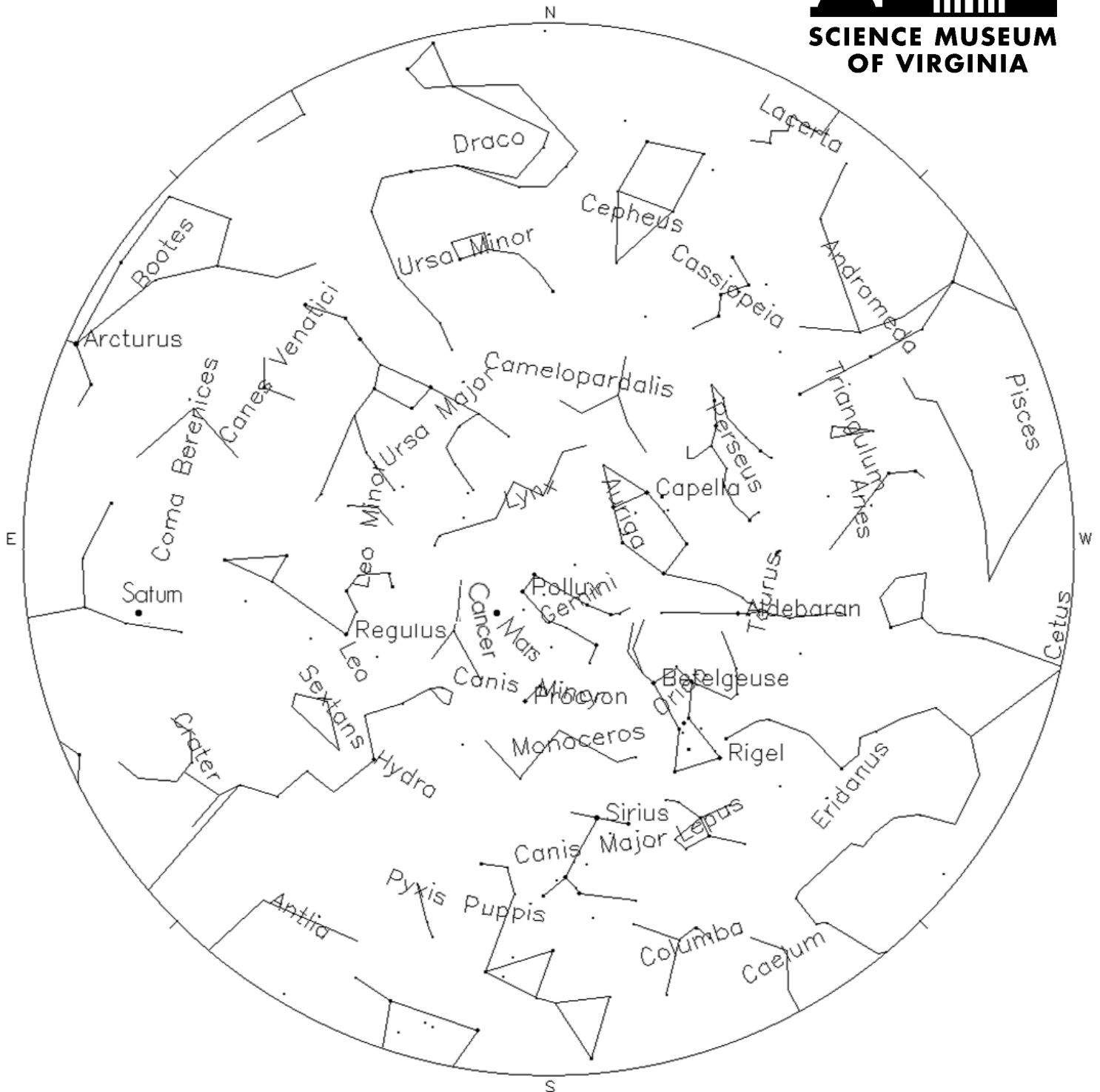
# STAR CHART MARCH 2010

This chart shows the whole sky as seen from the Virginia area around 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, or 9 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

The outer circle represents the ideal horizon. The center of the chart is the zenith, the point in the sky directly overhead. The bigger the dot, the brighter the star it represents.

The best way to use the chart is to choose a direction and face that direction. Then hold the chart so that the label for the direction you are facing is closest to the horizon. If the moon or city lights are very bright, you may not be able to see all the stars shown on the chart.

*This chart was prepared by the Science Museum of Virginia.*



# SKY HAPPENINGS MARCH 2010

## PLANETS THIS MONTH:

**Mercury** is not visible until the last week of the month, when it appears low in the west after sunset, and sets at about 8:15 p.m.

**Venus** appears low in the west after sunset, and is a little higher in the sky each night. Venus is the brighter star-like object in the west after sunset. On March 1, it sets at about 6:45 p.m. EST; by March 15, it sets at about 8:15 p.m. EDT; and by the end of the month Venus stands about 15° above the west horizon at sunset, and doesn't set until almost 9:00 p.m. EDT.

**Mars** stands almost overhead at sunset, and moves westward throughout the night to set in the northwest at about 5:00 a.m. Mars looks like a very bright red-colored star, and is brighter than any of the stars near it.

**Jupiter** is not visible until the second half of the month, when it rises in the southeast about 30 minutes before sunrise. Jupiter will look like a bright star in the morning twilight.

**Saturn** rises in the east at sunset, crosses the sky throughout the night, and is setting in the west at sunrise. Saturn looks like a pale yellow star.

## CELESTIAL EVENTS:

**March 3-17:** Zodiacal Light visible. This faint band of light can be seen rising vertically from the west horizon after dark. It is caused by sunlight reflecting off dust particles in the inner Solar System. To see the Zodiacal Light, you must be far from city lights, under a cloud-free sky with a clear view of the west horizon.

**March 7:** Last Quarter Moon 1.3° north of the bright star Antares in the early morning sky.

**Sunday, March 14, 2:00 a.m.:** Daylight Saving Time begins in the United States. "Spring forward" and turn your clocks ahead 1 hour before going to bed Saturday night.

**March 20, 1:32 p.m.:** Vernal (Spring) equinox. As the Sun crosses the Celestial Equator, this day marks the official start of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere, and the start of Autumn in the Southern Hemisphere.

**March 20:** Waxing Crescent Moon 0.3° south of Pleiades star cluster.

**March 21:** Saturn at opposition, 180° from the Sun as seen from Earth.

## MOON PHASES:

Last Quarter: **March 7**

New Moon: **March 15**

First Quarter: **March 23**

Full Moon: **March 29**



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