SKY CALENDAR MAY 2016
An aid to enjoying the changing sky

Evening Planets: Jupiter is high in the south at mid-month. Look for Jupiter east of Regulus in Leo the Lion. The gibbous moon is near Jupiter May 14. Mars reaches opposition May 22 and is closest to the Earth May 30. This is the closest Mars opposition since 2005. Be sure to take the opportunity to explore Mars through the telescope while it’s relatively close to us. Compare the magnitude of Mars with Jupiter when they are at similar altitudes in late evening. Mars continues to move retrograde until June 29. Saturn is to the lower left of Mars. The gap between Mars and Saturn increases from 8° to 15° during the month of May. The span from Saturn to Jupiter is 90° on May 25. Mercury is too faint to spot in the evening early in the month. Mercury transits the Sun on May 9. Observers in the eastern part of the US can see the entire transit. For observers in the west, the transit starts before sunrise. The transit lasts more than 7 hours. See http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/Mercury2016_map.pdf for world map of transit visibilities. See http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/Transit.php for exact times for US cities. Use proper eye protection when observing the transit.

Morning Planets: Mars and Saturn can be found low in the southwest at dawn. Saturn is to the upper left of brighter Mars. Saturn will be at opposition early next month. Mercury reappears late in the month after its transit, low in the ENE. Mercury is at mag +1.0 on May 30th. Venus is too close to the Sun to observe.

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