

Stargazer

Stars of the Milky Way Triangle

The Milky Way Triangle, also called the Summer Triangle, is currently high overhead in the early evening. Formed by three of the night sky's bright stars -- Vega, Altair, and Deneb -- the triangle is easy to identify.

Vega, the brightest overhead star, is a little to the northwest of the sky's straight-up point, called the zenith. Then with your hand held at arm's length, Deneb, the faintest of the triangle stars, is two fist-widths to the northeast of Vega. Altair, to the south, is four fist-widths from Deneb and three from Vega.

County considers tax abatement agreement

by Vanessa Goodwyn

The County Commissioners held a special meeting on Tuesday, September 29 to consider creating guidelines and criteria for granting tax abatements. The action is a pre-requisite for the county to be able to offer tax break incentives to bring commercial developments to this area, under Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code. Judge Byron Ryder and the commissioners discussed the criteria for the possible abatement agreement, and looked at a model from Burlleson County. No formal action was taken at

Although easily recognizable, the Milky Way Triangle is not an official constellation but rather is an asterism -- an informal pattern of stars. Each star of the triangle is the brightest star of its own constellation.

Vega, the night sky's fifth brightest star, is part of Lyra, the Musical Lyre, one of the smallest constellations. Its most distinctive feature is a small parallelogram hanging from Vega.

Deneb is the tail of Cygnus, the Swan. Under dark skies, Cygnus is seen flying generally southward down the middle of the Milky Way with its wings spanning the width of the Milky Way. The

swan's head, a fainter star, is two fist-widths from its tail.

Altair is the head of Aquila, the Eagle, which is flying along the eastern edge of the Milky Way in the opposition direction of Cygnus.

As with many things in nature, appearances can be deceiving. Our Sun is blindingly bright to us, yet it is much fainter than any of the triangle stars. It seems so bright because it is so close, a mere 8 light minutes (93 million miles) away.

While Deneb appears as the faintest star in the triangle, its true brightness is greater than that of Vega, Altair, and our Sun combined. A white supergiant star, Deneb only seems fainter because it is so much further away. Whereas Altair and Vega are virtual neighbors at 16 and 25 light years, respectively, Deneb is a whopping 1,500 light years away making it one of the most distant bright stars we can see with our naked eyes.

In a future column we'll tell the story of Vulpecula, the sly but foolish fox lurking in the Milky Way Triangle.

• Sky Calendar.

* Oct. 4 Sun.: The full Moon, being nearest the fall equinox, is this year's Harvest Moon.

* 8 Thu. morning: Saturn is less than a moonwidth to the upper left of brighter Mercury and well below brilliant Venus low in the east at dawn.

* 11 Sun.: The Moon is at 3rd quarter.

* 12 Mon. morning: Mars is above the bright Moon high

in the east before dawn.

* 13 Tue. morning: Saturn is a moonwidth to the left of much brighter Venus low in the east as they rise well before the Sun.

* 14 Wed. morning: Leo's brightest star Regulus is to the upper left of the crescent Moon before dawn.

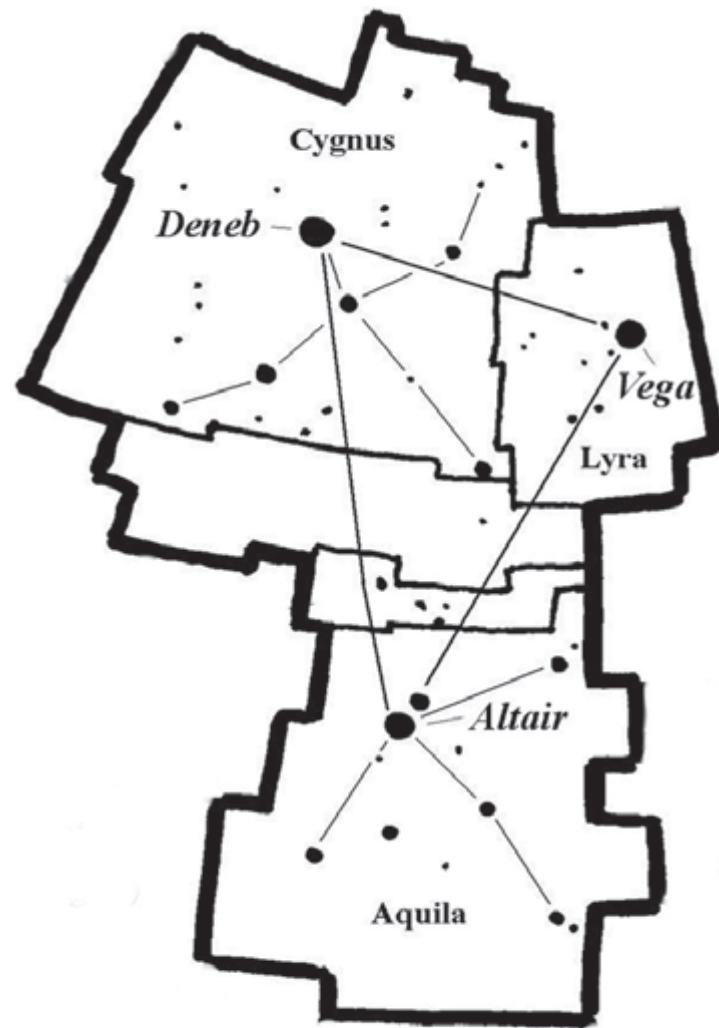
* 16 Fri. morning: The crescent Moon is to the right of Venus with Saturn above and Mercury well below Venus.

* 18 Sun.: The Moon is new.

* 20/21 Tue./Wed. all night: This could be a good year for the Orionid meteor shower with no Moon interference.

• Naked-eye Planets. Evening: Jupiter dominates in the south southeast. Morning: Saturn and Mercury are near the eastern horizon at dawn, below brilliant Venus with much fainter Mars high in the east.

• Astro Milestones. Oct. 4, 1957, Russia launched Sputnik I, beginning the Space Age and the Cold War space race.



Milky Way Triangle

Beck Elected Republican Chair

Marva Beck has been elected as the new chair of the Leon County Republican Party. Due to the resignation of Ken Jones as county chair, Beck was elected by the precinct chairs at a meeting held recently in the Village Room in Centerville.

"I am thrilled to serve in this new capacity" stated Beck. "I am concerned about the direction our great country is going and I want to help at this level, to define and give direction to the focus of Republicans in Leon County. We need to re-gain back what has been taken away from us - a little bit at a time through the years!"

Beck plans to "hit the ground running" and get out and meet all the precinct chairs and with as many Republicans as possible in each precinct. She wants to

get more young people and young families involved in local politics.

Leon County and this great state needs to remain strong and having good Republican candidates, from the local precincts to Washington, is one of her top priorities for the mid-term elections in 2010.

Beck, a native of Houston, moved with her family to Leon County in 1991. She assisted her husband in their business and on their ranch which is located near Centerville.

An active gardener, Marva became a Master Gardener and has served as president of the Texas Master Gardener Association. In 1998, she was honored as Master Gardener of the Year and also received First Place for Publications. Then in 2000, she was award-

ed Teacher/Leader of the Year Award for the Texas Junior Master Gardeners. This annual award is now named the "Marva Beck Teacher/Leader of the Year Award."

Marva has worked with the Post Oak Resource Conservation and Development organization, serving as chairman for two terms. She is president of the Texas Association of Resource Conservation and Development. She has also served as president of the Southwest Region Resource Conservation and Development, which includes six states and is the secretary of the National Association of Resource, Conservation and Development.

Currently, she serves as the treasurer and as usher for the First United Methodist Church in Centerville.

Shooting

arrive. The wounds did not appear to be life-threatening but the victim complained of severe pain and burning in his face and head where he had been peppered with shotgun pellets. His concern was for the children in house and the whereabouts of the shooter. Brown said he was grateful that he hadn't been holding his one-year-old baby at the time of the shooting.

Members of the Oakwood Volunteer Fire Department were the first responders on the scene. Chief Nathan Smith and his son, fellow firefighter Greg Smith, entered the residence, assessed the victim and relayed critical information to the EMS and police. The EMS personnel arrived shortly, made their own assessment, and loaded the victim into the back of the ambulance.

Outside, the man later arrested for the shooting, Derrick Dawson, had returned to

the scene. Members of his family rushed to the scene and found Dawson in handcuffs and being questioned. They spoke with law enforcement officers before Dawson was placed in a squad car and driven to the Leon County Sheriff's Department in Centerville. Witness statements were taken by members of the Leon County Sheriff's Department. Another witness from across the street reported that the shotgun blast had damaged his wife's car. A statement was taken from the victim by the Sheriff's Department and Oakwood's Chief of Police Lewis Miller.

Brown's brother left the hospital, where their mother lay in ICU, to come and see if Jason was okay. He got there just before they took his brother away in the ambulance, and was just in time to turn around and go back to the hospital.

After the victim was

from page 1A

taken to the hospital and the accused to the county jail, the Crime Scene investigation team arrived and processed both the inside and the outside of the residence for evidence. As of 1:30 Tuesday morning, Dawson had been booked into the County Jail but paperwork had not been completed and therefore, charges had not been filed. At that time, the weapon had not been recovered.

Brown was treated at Palestine Regional for the six shotgun pellet wounds to his face, nasal cavity, and head. He was given antibiotics to ward off infection and released. After her brother's brush with death, Brown's sister says she's checking her children out of school first thing in the morning and that the family is leaving Oakwood for good. She had only lived here for a couple of weeks, and now, she "regrets moving here at all."

Gun Show

in 1993 and currently has more than 200 members.

Annual family memberships are available for \$75.00 (seniors over 55 are \$65.00). Dues include unlimited range

use with guest privileges.

The Club holds concealed handgun license classes. Also available are hunter education classes, basic firearms instruction; monthly

shooting events and activities. The Leon County 4-H rifle teams practice at the range weekly at no charge.

from page 1A

Chupacabra

Sklar got a closer look, his curiosity was really piqued. "I've hunted all over -- south Texas, east Texas, west Texas -- haven't ever seen nothing like this before. If it WAS just a coyote, Lord knows he needed to be shot 'n put out of his misery! God-awful looking animal. Didn't have any hair on him, and the head -- the snout -- looked weird. It looked longer than a coyote's to me -- it really did." The creature's color was a mottled greyish-blue, and its canine lower incisors were exaggerated in size.

Sklar went back to house for a camera and took a picture. His wife took the photo to the local veterinarian's office, where technicians suggested it was a mangy coyote and recommended that the carcass be burned in order to prevent the spread of infection to any other animals. Sklar took that advice, and cut down a tree to make a big fire. Taking the precaution of wearing gloves, he dragged the carcass to the burn pile with a rope, then burned the rope and gloves as well.

A few months ago,

Ricky and Tammy Sklar had watched a television program that documented some very strange creatures killed in Alto (near Lufkin) and by a lady in the Hill Country. On the show, the name "chupacabra" had been applied to the animals. Ricky Sklar could not help making the comparison with his strange kill. "They looked just like this. I don't know what it was, but a lot of people are saying that's what it is." Tammy, for one, swears she won't be tramping

about the property at night, and will have a pistol on her hip when she IS out.

Sklar would be interested in talking with anyone else who has had a similar "close encounter" -- and we at the Buffalo Press would love to hear about it, too. (And hey -- Ben? Joe? Click your heels together three times, and come on home to Texas, Guys. Everything you're looking for is probably right in your own backyard!)

from page 1A

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND PROVISIONS OF THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CODE

THAT: Quesada-Lopez, Inc. (dba) Rancho Viejo #2

HAS FILED APPLICATION FOR: Mixed Beverage Permit with Food and Beverage Certificate.

SAID BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED AT:
335 Craig Street, Buffalo (Leon County), Texas 75831

OWNER: Quesada-Lopez, Inc. Catarina Antonio Gaspar, President and Secretary.

DON'T TAKE CHANCES.

Underground pipelines carry natural gas. So take care with projects like building a fence, widening a driveway, or planting trees. Put safety first. Dial 811 before you dig to find out if there are pipelines around your home. Just to be on the safe side.

WE DON'T JUST WORK HERE, WE LIVE HERE TOO.

XTO ENERGY