CLEVELAND MUSEUM *of* NATURAL HISTORY

THE STARGAZER

SPRING 2026

THE **OBSERVATORY**

This Hubble Space Telescope image shows Arp 4, a peculiar pair of galaxies in the constellation Cetus. The side-by-side appearance of these objects is merely an illusion—in reality, the galaxies are found at vastly different places in space (and time). The blue, irregularly shaped galaxy, known as MCG-02-05-050, lies 65 million light-years away. The distance of MCG-02-05-050a, the more diminutive galaxy with well-defined spiral arms, is far greater, at 675 million light-years away. This implies that MCG-02-05-050a is actually the larger of the two, and by a wide margin.

Fun Fact: Because MCG-02-05-050 is 65 million light-years away, the light we observe today left that galaxy shortly after the K–Pg extinction event here on Earth.

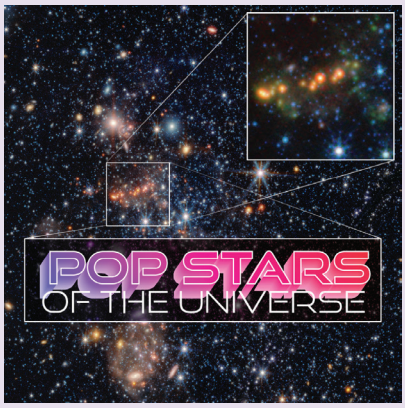
Hubble image depicting a duo of galaxies, seemingly in close proximity. Released December 22, 2025
Credit: ESA/Hubble & NASA, J. Dalcanton, Dark Energy Survey/DOE/FNAL/DECam/CTIO/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA

SHAFRAN **PLANETARIUM NEWS**

This spring, the Museum's Nathan and Fannye Shafran Planetarium is stepping into the future with a major Digistar software upgrade. Developed by Evans & Sutherland, a leading innovator in planetarium technology, Digistar is the industry-standard software used worldwide to power immersive, full-dome astronomy experiences. At the Shafran Planetarium, Digistar interfaces directly with our dome and advanced projection systems, enabling dynamic and engaging journeys through space. The Museum's Astronomy Department is hard at work implementing the Digistar 2025 upgrade to deliver sharper visuals, smoother navigation, and even more immersive explorations of the Universe. Join us as we embark on this exciting enhancement and get ready to experience the cosmos in new and inspiring ways.

Additionally, the Shafran Planetarium is currently running two public programs. The general public show is called *Pop Stars of the Universe*. The stars in our sky have fascinated and stunned humans for millennia, leading to a big question: Where did we come from?

With the aid of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), we can now look farther and deeper into the Universe than ever before! Visit the Shafran Planetarium to learn how stars "popped" in powerful explosions, distributing the elements needed for future stellar generations, and for a look at what the JWST is finding out about the first stars born in the Universe. **Showtimes:** Weekdays at 11am, 1pm & 3pm; weekends at noon & 3pm.



The children's planetarium show is called *Starlight, Star Bright*. The brightest stars you'll see tonight! Find out why certain stars stand out more than others in our sky, and see how the North Star stacks up against them. This kid-friendly adventure will explore everything from white-hot stars and their tiny companions to puffy giants on the brink of exploding. **Showtimes:** Weekends at 1pm.

Find more information about these programs and ticket information on our website. https://www.cmnh.org/explore/current-exhibits

PERIOD **PANORAMA**

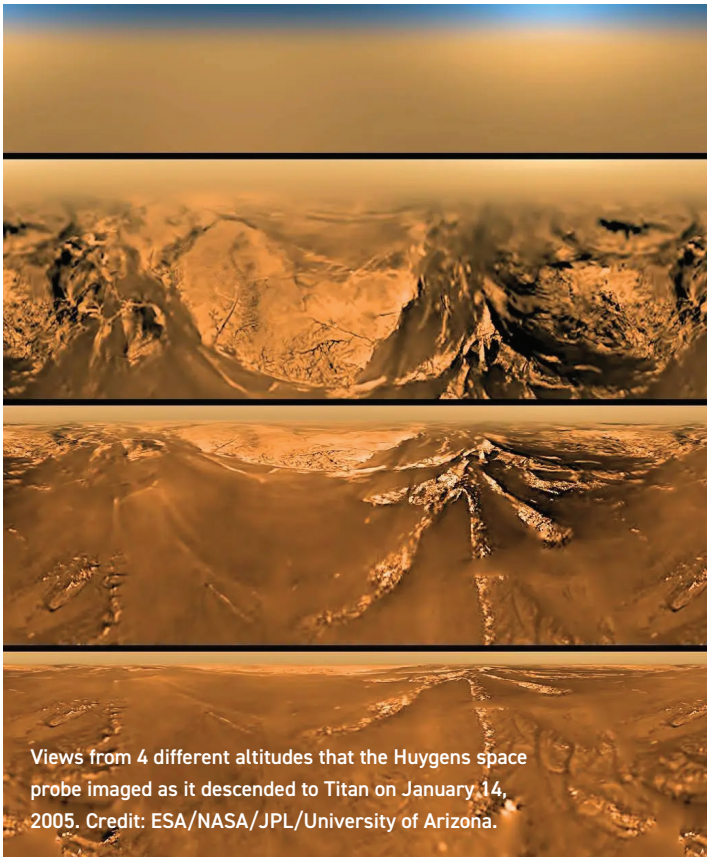
In the season of spring, the sky offers bright stars, visible planets, and highlights of our Moon. Check out what other cosmic events the night sky has to offer.

March 20: Spring Equinox. Resulting from the tilt of Earth's axis being pointed neither towards nor away from the Sun, the March Equinox marks equal amounts of day and night, with "equinox" meaning "equal night." The Northern Hemisphere shifts to the spring season, with nighttime hours getting shorter and daylight hours lengthening.

March 21: On this day in 2022, 5,000 total exoplanets had been found. Just three and a half years later, that count has reached 6,000! That number has been growing faster ever since the first exoplanet detections in the 1990s due to the advancements of technology, research, and knowledge about worlds outside our Solar System.

March 25: First Quarter Moon. The Pleiades in the constellation Taurus will be close by this half Moon in the sky, with the illuminated half pointing away from the star cluster. Moonrise: 12pm; moonset: 3am.

March 25: Anniversary of the discovery of the largest moon of Saturn, Titan. This spectacular moon was discovered by Christiaan Huygens in 1655, and 350 years later, it was visited by the Huygens space probe. Due to advancements in technology over the past few centuries, we now know that Titan is the second-largest moon, the only moon that has a dense atmosphere, and the only object besides Earth with stable surface liquid in the whole Solar System.



Views from 4 different altitudes that the Huygens space probe imaged as it descended to Titan on January 14, 2005. Credit: ESA/NASA/JPL/University of Arizona.

April 1: Full Pink Moon. This Moon has the nickname "Pink Moon," not because it changes color—it is still gray—but for the blooming wildflower pink moss phlox in early spring. Moonrise: 8pm; moonset: 7am.

April 9: Last Quarter Moon. The bright red star Antares in the constellation Scorpius will be close by this half Moon in the sky, with the illuminated half pointing away from the star. Moonrise: 3am; moonset: 11am.

April 17: New Moon.

April 22–23: Lyrid Meteor Shower Peaks. When Earth passes through the dusty debris in space left by Comet Thatcher, you may see 5 to 10 meteors per hour in the sky, seemingly radiating from the constellation Lyra. The Lyrids have been known to have bright and fast meteors for over 2,000 years, the first recorded sighting of the shower being in 687 BC in China. Viewing time: 2am–5am.

A composite image of 33 Lyrid meteors over Seč Lake in the Czech Republic, April 2020, taken by Petr Horálek

April 23: First Quarter Moon. The bright stars Pollux and Castor in the constellation Gemini, plus bright Jupiter, will be close by this half Moon in the sky, with the illuminated half pointed towards the twin stars and planet. Moonrise: 12pm; moonset: 3am.

May 1: Full Flower Moon. This Moon has a nickname "Flower Moon," which refers to the abundance of blooming flowers in the middle of spring. Viewing time: 9pm–6am. Moonrise: 9pm; moonset: 6am.

May 6–7: Eta Aquariid Meteor Shower Peaks. Twice a year, Earth passes through the dusty debris left by Halley's Comet orbit, producing the Eta Aquariids in May and the Orionids in October. The debris streaking through Earth's May sky seems to originate from the constellation Aquarius, which is low to the horizon before the Sun rises. Viewing time: 3–5am.

May 9: Third Quarter Moon. The bright and colorful Saturn and Mars will be rising in the East right before the sunrise at 5:30am, with the illuminated half of the Moon pointed towards the planets. Moonrise: 3am; moonset: 1pm.

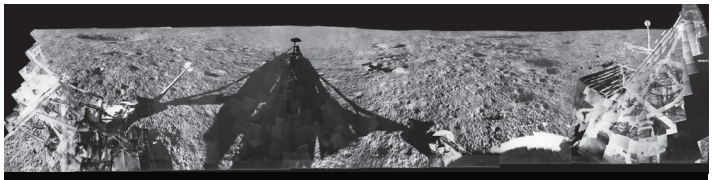
May 16: New Moon.

May 23: First Quarter Moon. The bright star Regulus in the constellation Leo will be close by this half Moon in the sky, with the illuminated half pointing towards the star. Moonrise: 1:30pm; moonset: 2:30am.

May 31: Blue Moon. Another Full Moon for May! A monthly blue Moon is a second full Moon in a calendar month due to the lunar orbit and phase cycles being slightly shorter than 30 days. Although a rare alignment of dates and cycles, this occurrence still does not change the appearance or color of the Moon! Moonrise: 10pm; moonset: 6:30am.

The second full Moon in the month of August 2012, taken in Nottingham, UK by Simon Smith (Planet-Si on Blogspot).

June 2: 60th anniversary of Surveyor 1's landing on the Moon. In 1966, NASA accomplished its first lunar soft lander mission and the first of the Surveyor program. The probe gathered compositional data and images of the surface of the Moon, providing key insights for the crewed landings just three years later. Between 12am and 8am, look up at the Waning Gibbous Moon at the dark areas towards the edge on the illuminated side to see where Surveyor 1 still sits!



Reconstructed Surveyor 1 panorama of the Flamsteed region in Oceanus Procellarum, the largest stretch of dark plains on the Moon. Credit: NASA / Philip Stooke, University of Western Ontario.

June 7: Spacecraft Tianwen-2 starts orbiting asteroid 469219 Kamo'oalewa. This will be the first up-close view of this near-Earth asteroid and quasi-satellite, which means it seems to orbit the Earth while it actually orbits the Sun at the same rate Earth does. The spacecraft will land on the asteroid and start collecting samples just a month later, on July 4, 2026.

June 8: Third Quarter Moon. Saturn will be close by this half Moon in the sky, with the illuminated half pointing towards the planet. Moonrise: 1:30pm; moonset: 2:30am.

June 9: Venus and Jupiter conjunction. The two brightest planets, due to their pale, thick clouds of gas reflecting sunlight, will both be in the sky off to the left of the constellation Gemini. Their proximity to each other in the sky from our perspective on Earth¬—just over 1 degree, or a pinky finger held at arm's length— is called a conjunction. Viewing time: 10pm¬–11:20pm.

June 14: New Moon.

A Perseid meteor dazzles in the skies above West Virginia. Captured August 12, 2016 Credit: NASA/Bill Ingalls

LOOK **AHEAD**

Mid-August ushers in the return of the Perseid Meteor Shower, and 2026 promises to deliver exceptional viewing conditions for this beloved event. Be sure to check out the summer edition of the Stargazer to learn more.