

## Our Night Sky for the week of September 17

Last week I mentioned that as Saturn moves along its orbit, its rings will become edge on when viewed from earth and more or less disappear. Not to worry, they will again rotate into view by about 2032 as Saturn continues along its 29-earth year orbit. The first time I saw Saturn “live” was very memorable. Back in 1969 I dragged my new wife to the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in Victoria for an open house (hey she knew she married a science geek). Back then they set their huge 73- inch telescope up for open house with an eyepiece. You squeezed yourself up to the eyepiece under this multi ton machine and in the eyepiece was a perfect view just hanging in space, Saturn’s rings open. An epic start to a multi year love of Astronomy, and my wife.

Moving over to Jupiter, fairly high in the south eastern sky and if you can see its moons think about Galileo puzzling out planetary motion. He pictured himself standing on one of Jupiter’s moons looking out away from the center and watching the other moons move across that sky and he put it together. For hundreds of years the astronomers with no instruments and no clocks had been trying to understand these seemingly random movements in our sky and Jupiter provided the hint, circles within circles. We are standing on one circle looking out at objects moving along their paths across our sky, the ecliptic, the larger and larger circles that the planets follow. Mystery solved.