

Our Night Sky for October 28th 2024

It's pretty obvious these days that winter is coming, never more so than when we change our clocks back an hour, on the first Sunday in November.

Some people credit Benjamin Franklin with the original idea of saving daylight as far back as 1784. It was again suggested and was used during both world wars as a way to help the war effort. I remember a time before daylight saving time, but I think in the mid 60's it was adopted across the country. It has never been especially popular, and we may see it ended before too long. Meanwhile there is one advantage and that is evening skies are available earlier. By mid December complete darkness is around six p.m. Meanwhile we can all think of Ben Franklin as we try and adjust to our shifted sleep times.

This week we have a good opportunity to see Saturn at it's best. It is easy to spot in the south east in a moonless sky. Go on-line and select Sky and Telescope and do a search for Saturn's moons. They have an easy to use map of Saturn's four largest moons, tonight for example all four are easy to separate two on each side. If you are successful, try again a couple more times this week and you can see how the moons move from night to night. This is one of the clues that helped Galileo understand how our solar system works and timing the rise and set times of these moons helped the understanding of the precision of orbital math, and it is also one of the most beautiful sights in Our Night Sky.