

Re: Lost in Space!! How to align?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.astro.amateur/2005-01/2330.html>

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Date: 01/13/05

Date: Thu, 13 Jan 2005 09:40:59 GMT

On 12 Jan 2005 08:21:32 -0800, lfgarcia@hotmail.com wrote:

*>I decide that my first step will be "get to know the space" since I
>guess I can only tell which one is the moon (can I? =D), and after
>that I will then go back to the telescope.*

That seems like a sound idea to me!

I've seen other posts recommending a planisphere as a good way to learn your way around the sky and I think that would be fine as well. However, I wanted to recommend as an alternative a thin, magazine-sized book called "Star Maps for Beginners" by Levitt and Marshall. This book was originally published in 1942 but has been rereleased many times. I first bought a copy around 1977 or 1978 and, for reasons of nostalgia, bought another copy in 1994.

Anyway, the book has a lot of good information of interest to the new observer but the focus of the book is 12 star charts that show the constellations visible in the evening sky (exact times are given) from horizon to horizon for every month of the year. Each star chart is drawn in sort of a "Maltese cross" shape which eliminates the distortion in the shapes of the constellations often seen in full sky maps. The shapes of the constellations on the maps in this book are as they really are in the sky.

When I was first starting out, it was this book that taught me my way around the sky. It was very, very simple to use and highly recommend it. It can be found at Amazon.com among other places. Here's the link.

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0671791877/qid=1105608625/sr=8-1/ref=pd_ka_1/002-0724773-42

Also you might appreciate a subscription to "Astronomy" or "Sky and Telescope" magazine (or both!). Both of these should be easy to find at your local bookstore or even grocery store (our local Safeway carries both). In my opinion, S&T is targeted at a more advanced audience but both are interesting and informative to new or seasoned enthusiasts alike. When I was a kid I read and re-read every issue of

sci.astro.amateur: Re: Lost in Space!! How to align?

S&T the local library had to offer until they ended up actually just giving them to me (years 1973–1979 I think). What can I say? I was a pretty big dork when I was young. At least that hasn't changed with age. :-)

Best of luck