



The Cosmic Reporter

by Tim and Brenda Linder
"Leo, the Lion"

The constellation of Leo is now rising in the eastern sky and is well up by 9 p.m. Although Leo represents a lion, it looks more like a backward question mark.

The association with a lion dates back about 5,000 years ago when the sun rose in the constellation of Leo at the Summer Solstice. During the Summer in the Middle East the sun was fierce and destroying. So, of course, the fierce and powerful lion was an appropriate symbol.

In Greek mythology, Leo was known as Nemean Lion. It was a monstrous beast whose mother was the moon. When it came to Earth as a shooting star, it completely devoured all the people and animals of a large area of Greece.

Hercules, a half-god with superhuman strength, was ordered to destroy the beast. Since no weapon could pierce the skin of the lion, Hercules was forced to chase it into a cave and choke it to death with his hands. Hercules skinned the lion and used the skin as a shield until his death. After

Hercules died, the skin of the lion was nailed in the sky as a trophy where it hangs today.

There are several galaxies in the constellation of Leo that are of interest to the telescopic observer. M65 and M66 are two galaxies near the "hips" of the Lion. They are of magnitudes 9 and 8, respectively, and appear as two elongated patches of light when viewed through a telescope.

M95, M96, and M105 are all at the "belly" of Leo. M96 and M105 are of magnitude 9 while M95 is of magnitude 10. M95 and M96 are close enough together to be seen through the same low power field of a telescope. M105 can be found a little to the north of M95 and M96.

The star marked "A" on the star map is Gamma Leonis which is a very nice double star. Its components are of magnitudes 2.4 and 3.8, and both are yellowish in color. This double star will be most striking when viewed through a telescope.

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Hours: 6-9 p.m.



ANNUAL MEETING

PACOLET AREA CONSERVANCY

The Public Is Invited To Attend

April 21, 1992 7:30 p.m. Stearns School Auditorium, Columbus, NC

Guest Speaker from The Nature Conservancy

Exciting Program with Free Refreshments — See You There!!