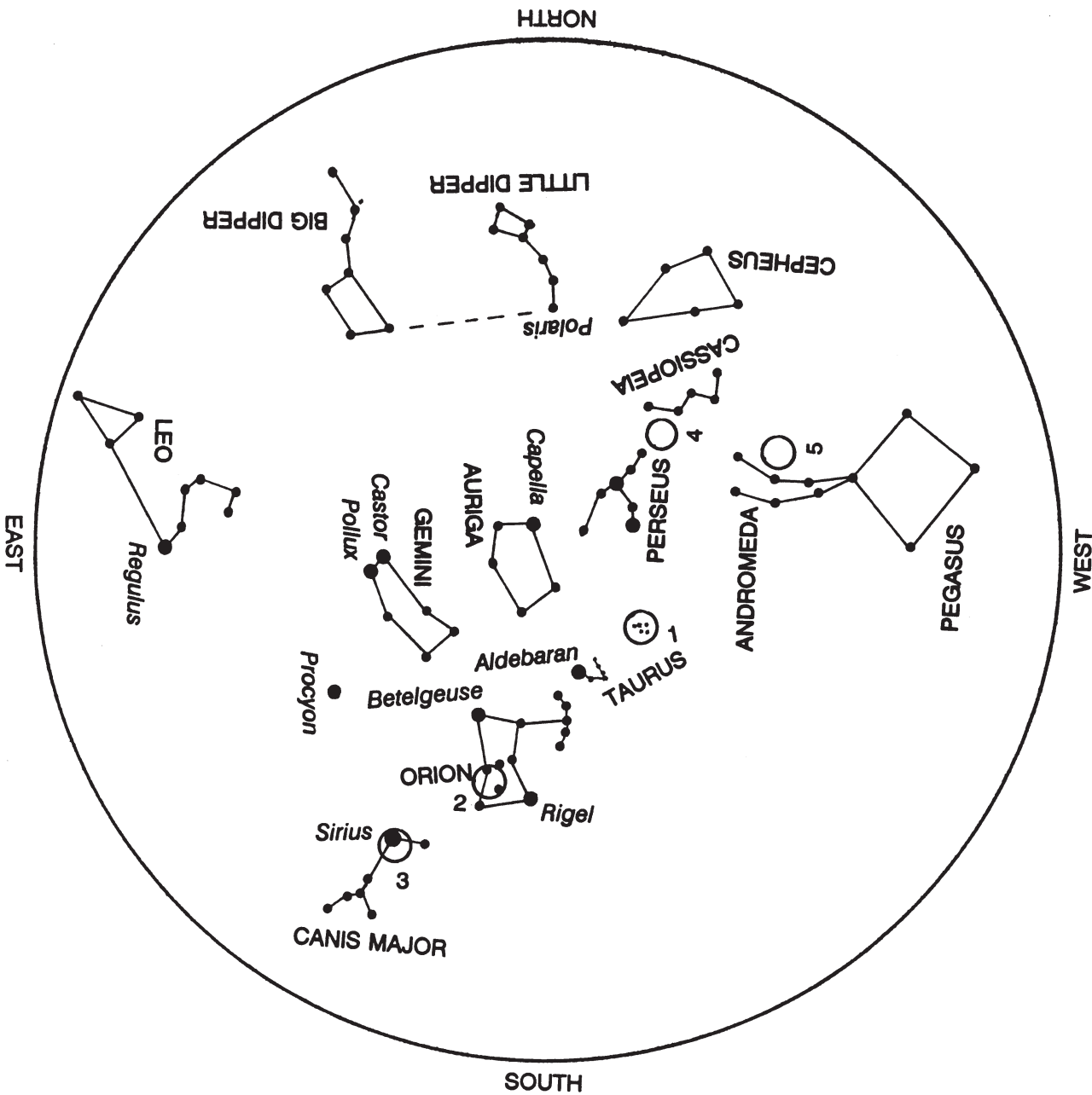
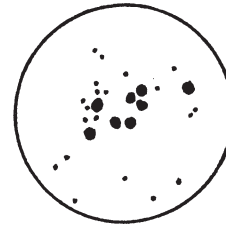


February (Approximately 7:00 p.m.)



1. Pleiades



Open Cluster in Taurus

R.A. 03^h43.9^m Dec. 23°58'

Other names: Seven Sisters, M45

To some it resembles a little dipper. This cluster is 410 ly away, and approximately 50 stars can be seen with binoculars. The nine brightest stars lie within a circle 7 ly in diameter, with the rest of the cluster stretching out to a diameter of 20 ly.

2. Orion Nebula



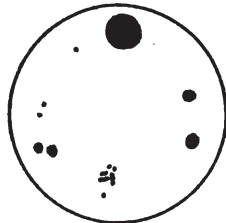
Diffuse Nebula in Orion

R.A. 05^h 32.9^m Dec. -5° 25'

Other names: M42 or NGC 1976

The fuzzy second star in Orion's sword is the brightest diffuse nebula in our skies. M42 lies about 1700 ly away. Its bright central region is 5-6 ly across with the rest of the nebula stretching out to approximately 30 ly in diameter. M42 will appear as a pale, wispy cloud through your binoculars.

3. M41



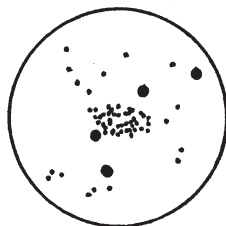
Open Cluster in Canis Major

R.A. 06^h44.9^m Dec. -20°42'

Other name: NGC 2287

Just below the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, this cluster can be seen with the naked eye in a very dark sky. M41 lies at a distance of 2350 ly and has a diameter of 20 ly. The cluster contains 25 bright stars and as many as 150 fainter stars.

4. h & X Persei



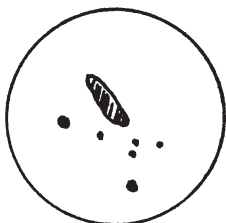
Double Cluster in Perseus

R.A. 02^h 17.2^m Dec. 56° 54'

Other names: NGC 869 & NGC 884

Though the two appear close to each other in the sky, they are not physically connected. The closest cluster (NGC 869) lies 7400 ly from us, contains approximately 400 stars and is 11.5 million years old. NGC 884 is approximately 8500 ly distant, contains 300 stars and is 16 million years old. Both clusters appear to be 70 ly in diameter.

5. Andromeda galaxy



Spiral Galaxy in Andromeda

R.A. 00^h40.0^m Dec. 41°00'

Other names: M31, NGC 224

The Andromeda galaxy is the most distant object that can be seen with the naked eye. At a distance of 2.2 million ly and a diameter of 180,000 ly, this galaxy appears as a fuzzy cigar with a brighter central region. The Andromeda galaxy contains over 300 billion stars.