WEEKLY SKY REPORT

October 18 - October 24, 2026

SCIENCE CENTERS

The Lawrence Hall of Science has a great planetarium show to start off autumn called Traditions of the Fall Sky. This 30-minute show covers the sights to look forward to, as well as exploring the Ohlone and other cultures' traditions for the Sun, Moon, planets and stars. Another sure-to-please show is Diving into the Blue Planet, which explores the 70% of Earth that is water and the creatures and features found therein. The other 30-minute planetarium show on offer is The Sun's Fury, which is described: "the Sun is also a dynamic and moody star. It has many cycles in the sky, and it also has a cycle of magnetic activity that is peaking right now. Explore outbursts of energy from the stormy Sun and how they create space weather that can have many impacts here on Earth and throughout the solar system."
https://lawrencehallofscience.org/exhibits/planetarium

CONSTELLATIONS

Cygnus the swan is directly overhead as it gets dark. Ursa Major is in the north west pointing the way with the two stars on the right of the pitcher to her North Star, her cub Ursa Minor. Mama bear's tail is also pointing due west to the red giant star Arcturus, known as the Guardian of the Bear. It is the fourth-brightest star in the sky and is an aging star, about 7 billion years old. While it has close to the same mass as our sun, Arcturus is 25 times our star's size and 170 times as luminous. This star rests at the bottom of the constellation Boötes, also known as the asterism The Giant Ice Cream Cone; next to it is Corona Borealis, or the asterism The Scoop of Ice Cream that Fell off the Giant Ice Cream Cone.

PLANETS

Saturn is making its way back to our evening sky and is visible due east just after dusk. Mars rises around 2am and will cross into the evening sky in November. Venus is shedding its Evening Star self as it heads towards becoming the Morning Star.

Telescopes @ Berkeley Public Library!

We have a Orion StarBlast Astro Reflector Telescope that you can borrow for 1 week. Place a hold on it and then pick it up from your branch when it is ready. It is fairly easy to carry at 13 lbs., and stands about 2 feet tall.

Here's what you get:
"A great compact grab-and-go telescope designed for entry-level and intermediate astronomy enthusiasts. Substantial 4.5" aperture and fast f/4 focal ratio provides bright, detailed views of solar system targets like the Moon and planets, as well as wide-field celestial objects like nebulas and star clusters."

We also have pairs of binoculars to check out!

Much of the information for this report comes from the wonderful web site, Heavens Above. You can enter your home city location and bookmark it for easy access: http://www.heavens-above.com. Other stellar sources include: http://www.space.com and http://www.nasa.gov. And check spacex.com for launches.

Binoculars @ Berkeley Public Library!

Thanks to a generous donation from the Cal Falcons program, we have 9 Vortex-Raptor binocular kits that you can put on hold and pick up at the location of your choice.

Here's what you get:
Porro prism performance in a mid-size, wide-angle design, the Raptors deliver a bright, crisp image with excellent color fidelity - even in low light conditions. With a wide range of interpupillary distance, they can easily be adjusted to fit anyone in the family, making them ideal for serious, hard-core youth hunters. The kit comes with a copy of The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western America and a pocket guide to local birds of the SF Bay Area. But it is also great for looking at planets, the moon and the stars!

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