

# Winter Night Sky

by Julian Celms

**I**t's winter. And yes it's cold outside. It is also a fantastic time to go stargazing – there are no bugs to swat at, night sets in early and the stars are shining if you get away from the city!

So take some time and brush up on the night sky. The constellations you see will change over the course of the year – as the earth rotates around the sun. Try to go out during different times of the year and point out the new constellations to explore.

The diagram below is from the *Fieldbook for Canadian Scouting*. This can be a handy reference to use, and a book many of your youth would have (or should consider investing in!).

One challenge you might face is light pollution – the reflection of city and ambient light we produce that prevents us from seeing the night sky. This depends on where you live – some stars may be visible, while



**Reaching for the stars?  
Check out these web sites:**

<http://www.skynews.ca/pages/clubs.html#Anchor-Albert-8143>

<http://www.rasc.ca/>

<http://domeofthesky.com/>

others can't compete with a large amount of city lights. An alternative would be to plan some stargazing when on a camping trip, or traveling a distance to gaze a little further away from the city.

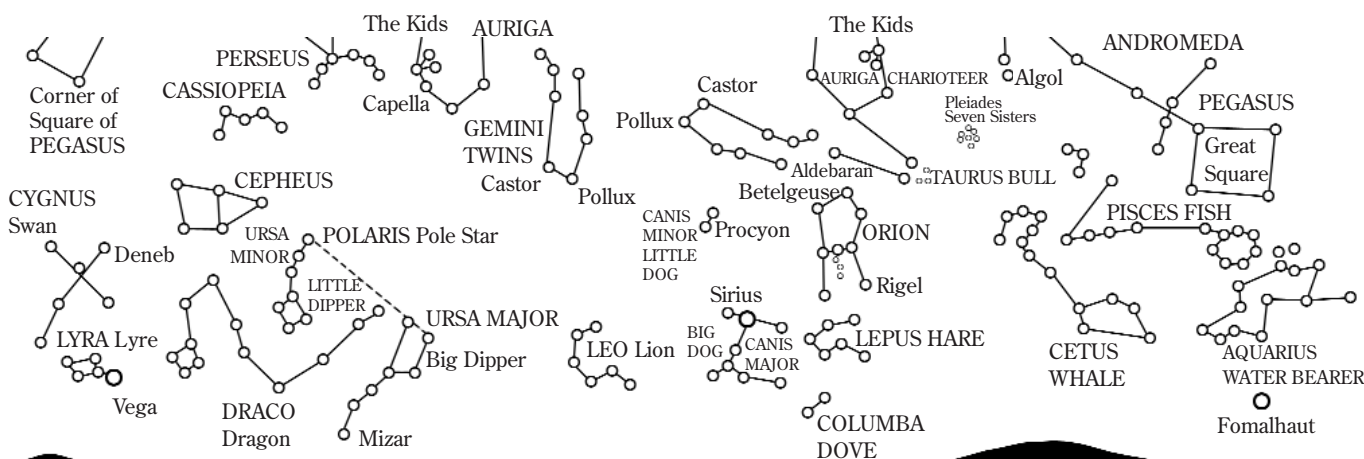
So where to start? One of the key stars to locate is Polaris – or the North Star. This doesn't move in the sky, and allows you a consistent starting point when gazing upwards. Popular con-

stellations to work with your youth to identify include the Big Dipper and Little Dipper in the north part of the sky. In the southern sky, Orion, Sirius and Pisces Fish would be worth looking for next. Check out the *Fieldbook* on page 408 – 412 for hints on how to locate some of these stars!

For the most part, you don't need special equipment when stargazing. Binoculars and telescopes can be a lot of fun – but without a tripod they can also be fidgety and difficult when first time stargazers are trying to locate stars. However, with the aid of a telescope you can have the opportunity to show your youth planets, the surface of the moon and clusters of stars up close! You might consider contacting a local astronomy club who might be able to lend a hand and provide some additional expertise or even see a planet!

See you outside, and happy gazing!

– Julian Celms is starry eyed as Director of Beavers, Cubs and Outdoors.



**THE WINTER SKY**

Looking NORTH

Nov. 1, 12 midnight; Nov. 15, 11 p.m.; Dec. 1, 10 p.m.;  
Dec. 15, 9 p.m.; Jan. 1, 8 p.m.

**THE WINTER SKY**

Looking SOUTH

Nov. 1, 12 midnight; Nov. 15, 11 p.m.; Dec. 1, 10 p.m.;  
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