

To use your star chart, hold it over your head. To avoid ruining your night vision with a bright flashlight, use a red light, or put a red balloon or brown paper bag over your flashlight for a muted glow.

Align north on the chart with north in the night sky by finding Polaris, the North Star. Begin by locating the **Big Dipper**. Draw a line “upward” between the Dipper’s “pointer stars” **to guide you to Polaris**, going about four and a half times the distance between the two pointer stars. The Dipper’s handle “arcs” toward the orange star Arcturus, where you can “speed on to Spica” and then “curve on to Corvus.”

The winter constellations Orion, Taurus and Gemini are still visible in early spring in the west. Tracing a line through **Orion’s Belt** will lead you westward to **Aldebaran** (the red “eye” of Taurus) or eastward to **Sirius** (the “Dog Star” in Canis Major). Sirius is the brightest star in our nighttime sky. These winter stars and constellations are followed across the sky by the spring patterns Leo, Ursa Major (which includes the Big Dipper) and Virgo. Find **Leo the Lion** just south of the Big Dipper by locating the backward question mark that outlines his head and mane.

In April 2014, bright **Jupiter** becomes visible at nightfall in the constellation Gemini. Early this month, reddish **Mars** rises in the east soon after sunset near the bright star Spica in the constellation Virgo; by late in the month, Mars is fairly high in the southeast at nightfall.

Saturn rises in the east-southeast three hours after sunset early in the month, but during evening twilight by month’s end. **Venus** is currently a “morning star” shining brilliantly in the eastern dawn sky. Speedy little **Mercury** never strays far from the Sun and will be difficult to spot this April.

Earth’s **Moon** goes through phases from new to full and back again in about a “moonth.” On April 4-5, the waxing crescent Moon will be visible during the afternoon and evening. On April 15, the Full Moon falls into Earth’s shadow, creating a **total lunar eclipse** that will be visible from North Carolina from 3:06 a.m. to 4:24 a.m.

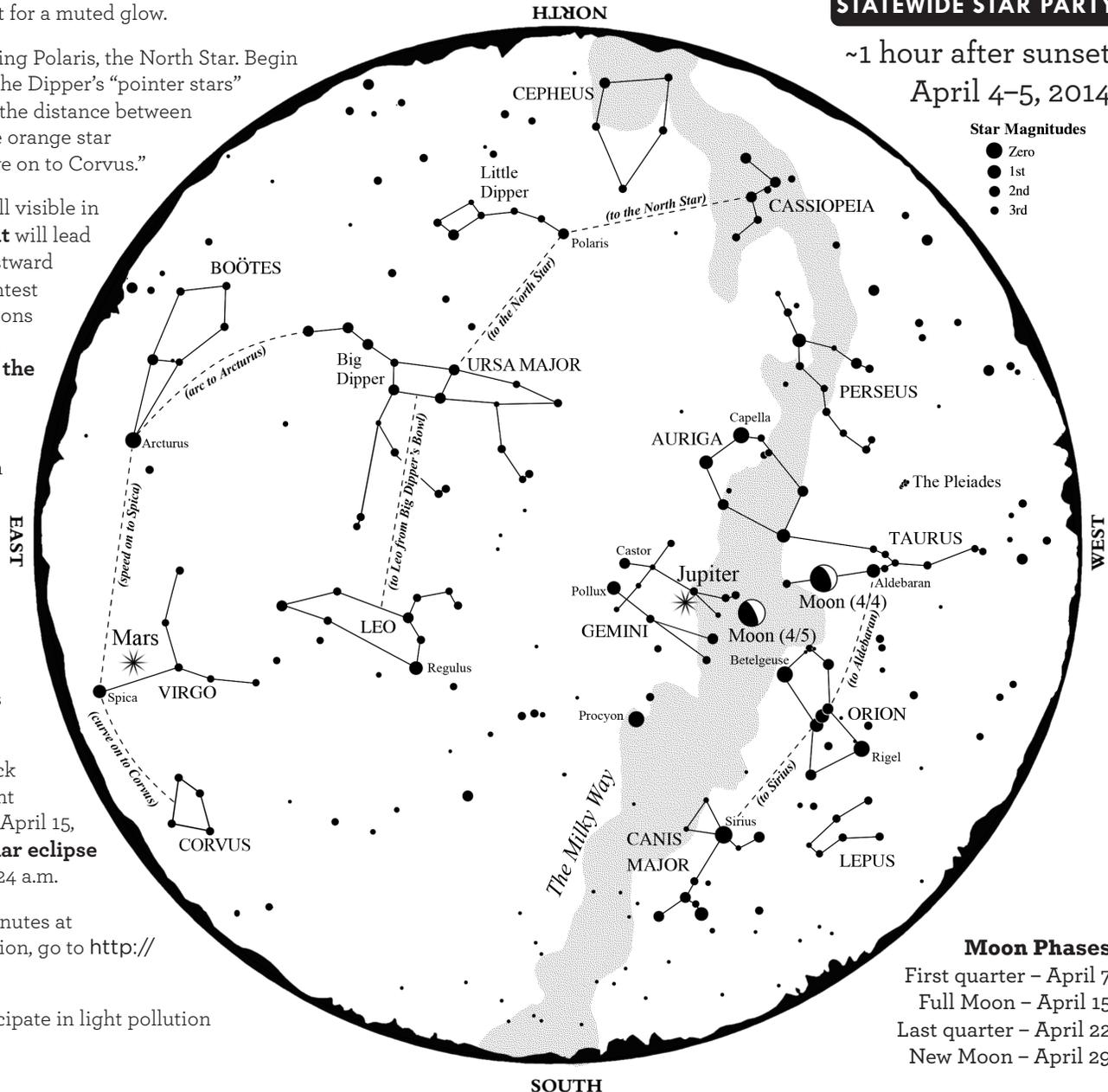
The **International Space Station** orbits Earth every 90 minutes at 17,500 mph. To find out when it can be seen from your location, go to <http://spottestation.nasa.gov/>

Visit **GLOBE at Night** (www.globeatnight.org/) to participate in light pollution education as a Citizen Scientist.

~1 hour after sunset
April 4-5, 2014

Star Magnitudes

- Zero
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd



Moon Phases

- First quarter – April 7
- Full Moon – April 15
- Last quarter – April 22
- New Moon – April 29



The Statewide Star Party is made possible by the generous grant support of the North Carolina Space Grant.

www.ncsciencefestival.org/special-opportunities/starparty/