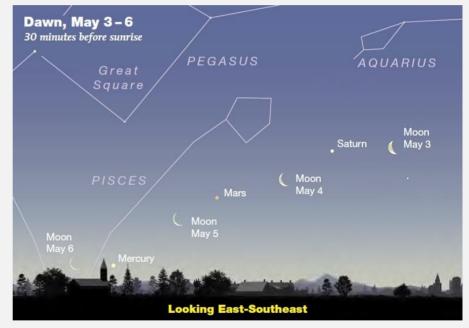
Astronomy Club of Asheville May 2024 Highlight The Moon and 3 Planets at Dawn

This article and illustration are courtesy of the folks at **SKY & TELESCOPE**

May 3-6

At dawn on May 3rd, there's a "four for the price of one" array of planets with the Moon. From right to left we have the Moon, Saturn, Mars, and Mercury. All three planets shine at roughly the same brightness. Saturn glows at magnitude 1.2, while Mars is just a wee bit brighter at magnitude 1.1. Far more noticeable is the color contrast between these two, with Mars displaying a peachy-orange hue and Saturn a pale, honey-yellow. Brightest of all is Mercury, which is a +0.8 magnitude dot *just* above the eastern horizon. On this particular morning, it achieves an altitude of only 3° half an hour before sunup. You'll need binoculars to have any chance of claiming it.



As for the Moon, it's a 28%-illuminated, waning crescent on May 3rd. On each of the three subsequent mornings, it will participate in a new and interesting conjunction. At dawn on the 4th, it's roughly midway between Saturn and Mars; on the 5th, it's parked between Mars and Mercury (slightly closer to the former); and on the 6th, it sits above left of Mercury. Plenty of reasons to keep an eye on the morning sky!