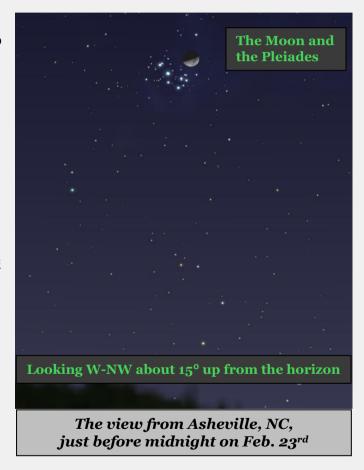
## Astronomy Club of Asheville February 2026 Highlight Close Encounter of the Snow Moon with the Pleiades Star Cluster

On the night of February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the First Quarter Snow Moon will pass across the top of the Pleiades star cluster – moving from west to east (right to left).

Here in the Asheville area, this close encounter will occur about 15° above the W-NW horizon in the constellation Taurus – the Bull. You will need to use binoculars or a small telescope at low power to fully appreciate the view of the star cluster. The conjunction will begin about 9:00 p.m. on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and continue for 4 hours until about 1:00 a.m. on February 24<sup>th</sup>. The Moon appears to sit atop the Pleiades just before midnight on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Moon orbits eastward, about 13° along the "ecliptic" (the path across the sky that the Sun, Moon, and the planets appear to follow) from one day to the next, or about ½° per hour. Because the Pleiades star cluster is located along that ecliptic path, it is often involved with lunar conjunctions and occultations.



The Pleiades star cluster – aka the "Seven Sisters" – is located some 440 light years behind the Moon. Enjoy the view!