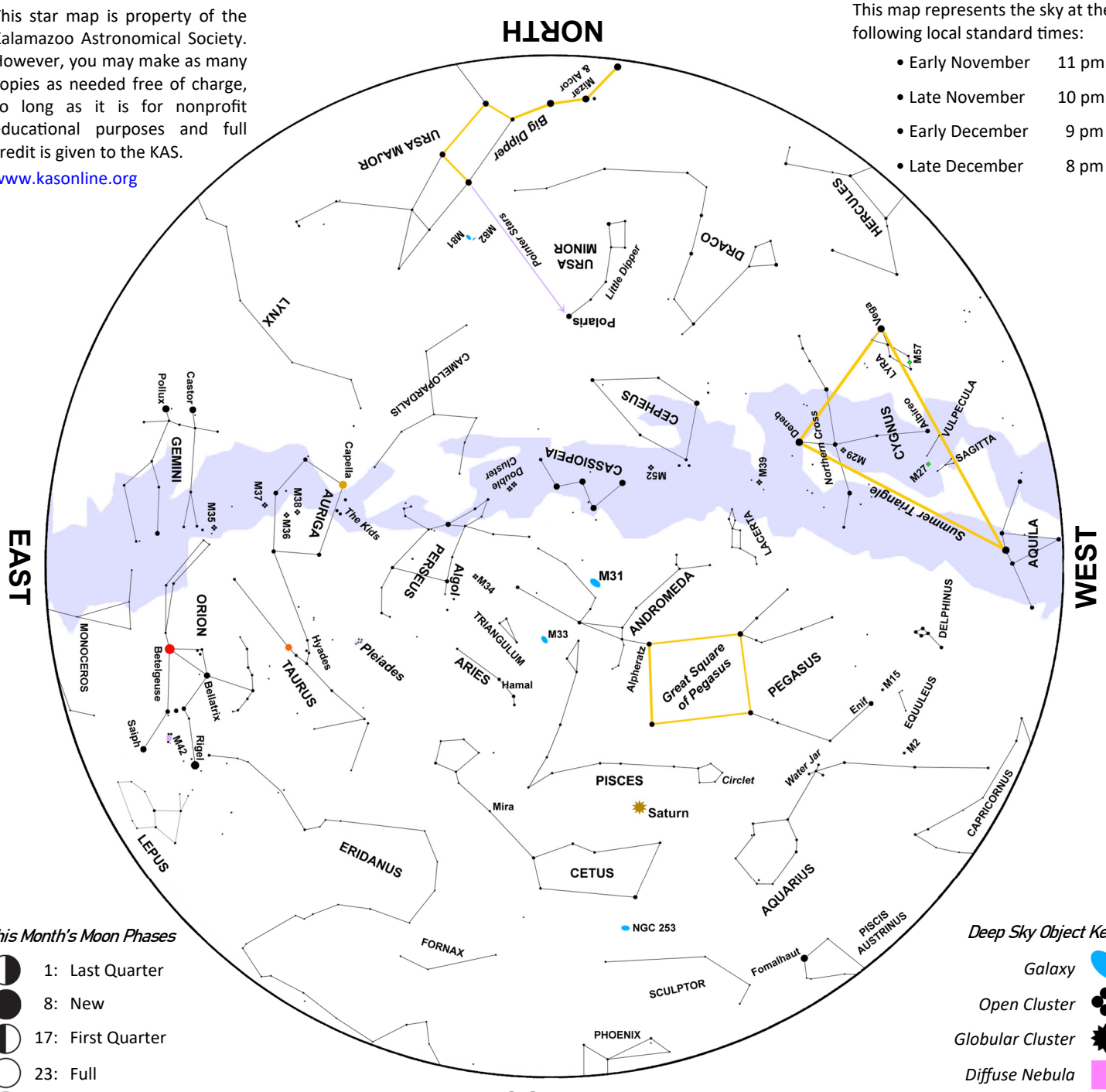
December Night Sky

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This map represents the sky at the following local standard times:

- Early November 11 pm
- Late November 10 pm
- Early December 9 pm
- Late December 8 pm



This Month's Moon Phases

- 1: Last Quarter
- 8: New
- 17: First Quarter
- 23: Full
- 30: Last Quarter

Deep Sky Object Key

- *Galaxy*
- *Open Cluster*
- *Globular Cluster*
- *Diffuse Nebula*
- *Planetary Nebula*

Follow a string of celestial bodies just before sunrise on December 1st. Start low in the east-southeast with Mercury. Turn your gaze to the upper right, and you'll encounter Venus near Spica, followed by the last-quarter Moon, and finally Mars, Regulus, and Jupiter grouped in an isosceles triangle high in the southwest.

The Geminid meteor shower, one of the most reliable meteor showers of the year, peaks on the night of December 13th-14th. The waxing crescent Moon sets at 9:27 pm and won't interfere with peak viewing. From a dark-sky site, observers could spot between 120 and 150 meteors per hour. Unlike most meteor showers that come from comets, the Geminids originate from rocky debris shed by the asteroid (or "rock comet") 3200 Phaethon.

Point your binoculars toward the waxing gibbous Moon at dusk on December 21st and see if you can spot the Pleiades. The Moon is to the immediate left of seven sisters.

Look toward the west-southwest at dawn on December 27th to see Jupiter 3¼° to the upper left of a waning gibbous Moon, while Regulus, in the constellation Leo, is 3½° to the left of the giant planet.