

FEATURES

18 Decoding the Oldest Light in the Universe

Reverberating deep-space echoes reveal the history and composition of the universe, thanks in part to the simple science of sound.

By Gary Hinshaw & Robert Naeye

COVER STORY

24 Reunion with Mercury

January's flyby of this fire-and-ice world was the first in more than three decades.

By J. Kelly Beatty

28 The Mystery of the Million-Mass Cloud

Astronomers dissect the biggest of the enigmatic "high-velocity clouds" plunging into the Milky Way.

By Govert Schilling

66 Glimpse the Moon's Far Side

Get 9% more Moon at no extra cost — thanks to lunar libration!

By Gary Seronik

82 Earth and Sky United

An international team of photographers uses the night sky to inspire worldwide oneness.

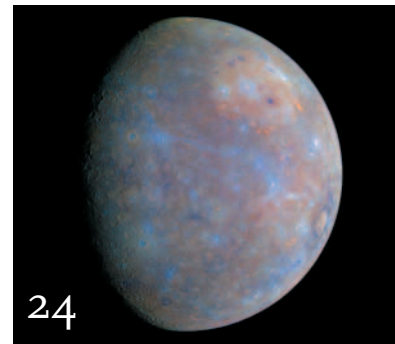
By Babak A. Tafreshi & Mike Simmons

82



OSCHIN D. ZAKARIAN

On the cover: The last time a spacecraft flew past Mercury was 1975. But NASA's Messenger made a return visit in January, and scientists agree that the 1,200 eye-popping images it captured (like this false-color view) were worth the wait. Turn to page 24 to see the "iron planet" as never before.



NASA / JHU/APL / CARNEGIE INST. OF WASHINGTON

THIS MONTH'S SKY

47 May 2008 Sky at a Glance

48 Northern Hemisphere's Sky

Exploring the Great Bear

By Fred Schaaf

50 Binocular Highlight

Galaxy Whirlpool

By Gary Seronik

51 Suburban Star-Hop

Cluster Near, Cluster Far

By Ken Hewitt-White

53 Southern Hemisphere's Sky

By Greg Bryant

54 Sun, Moon, and Planets

Twilight Spectacle

By Fred Schaaf

63 Exploring the Moon

Hide-and-Seek Basin

By Charles A. Wood

70 Celestial Calendar

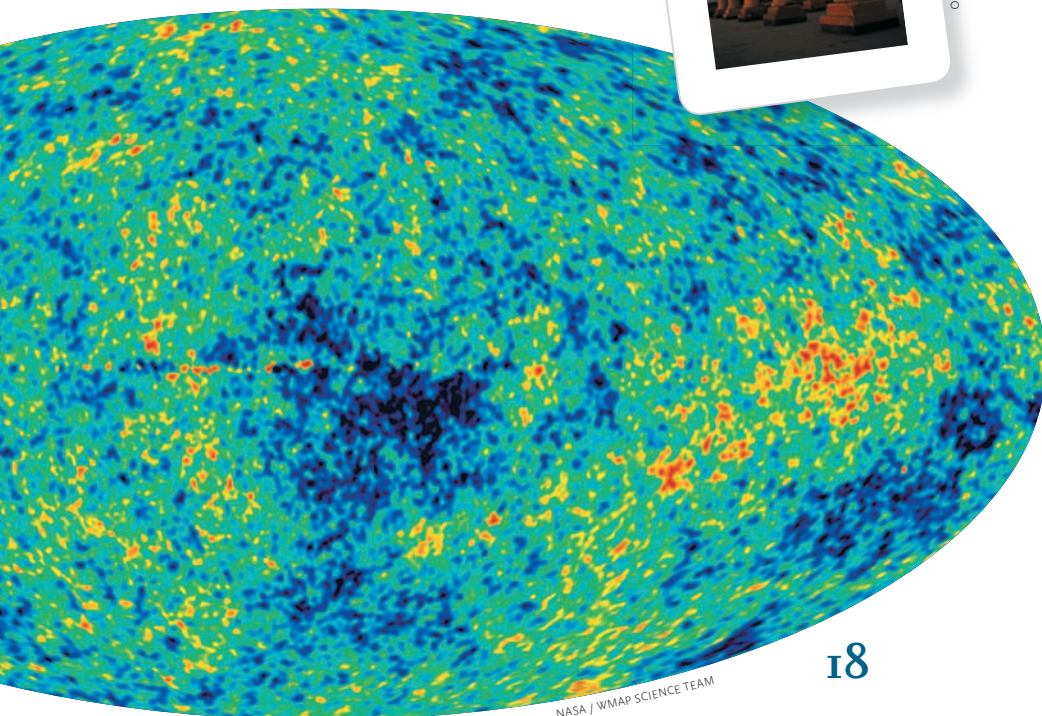
Springtime Asteroids

By Alan MacRobert

74 Deep-Sky Wonders

The Immortal Beast

By Sue French



NASA / WMAP SCIENCE TEAM

18



31

S&T TEST REPORT

31 To the Point with mySKY

Enjoy your own personalized planetarium show under a starry sky with this clever bit of electronic wizardry from Meade.

By Dennis di Cicco

34 Quick Look: FAR-Sight Binocular Mount

Here's a binocular mount built for a lifetime.

By Gary Seronik

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CONTENTS, CONTINUED

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

10 Spectrum

Out to Launch

By Richard Tresch Fienberg

12 Letters

14 News Notes

15 Mission Update

By Jonathan McDowell

16 50 & 25 Years Ago

By Leif J. Robinson

36 New Product Showcase

39 Books & Beyond

43 Rambling Through the Skies

Theatrical Lighting

By E. C. Krupp



78 Telescope Workshop

The Hollimon Secondary Holder

By Gary Seronik

80 Hobby Q&A

96 Focal Point

Science or Spacemen?

By Steven Weinberg

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GARY SERONIK

66

ON THE WEB

ASTRONOMY NEWS

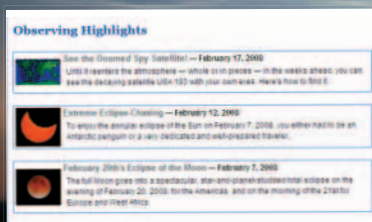
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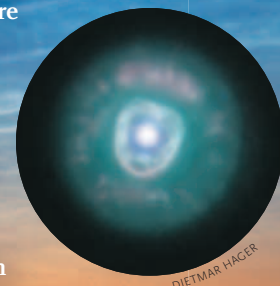
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