

One Good Target

With Some Other Sights Worth Seeing
While You're in the Neighborhood

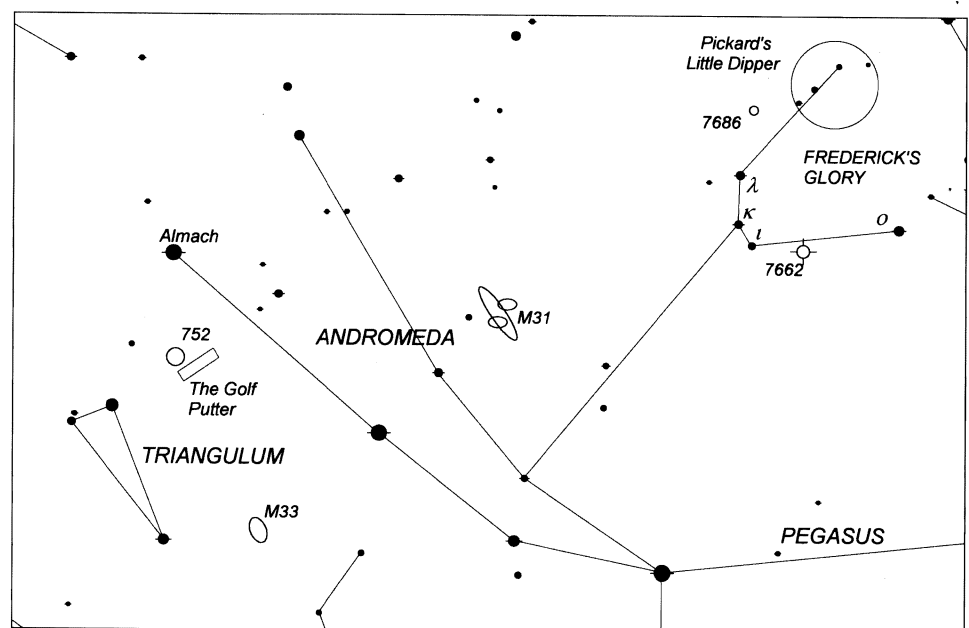
November

Underappreciated Areas in Andromeda

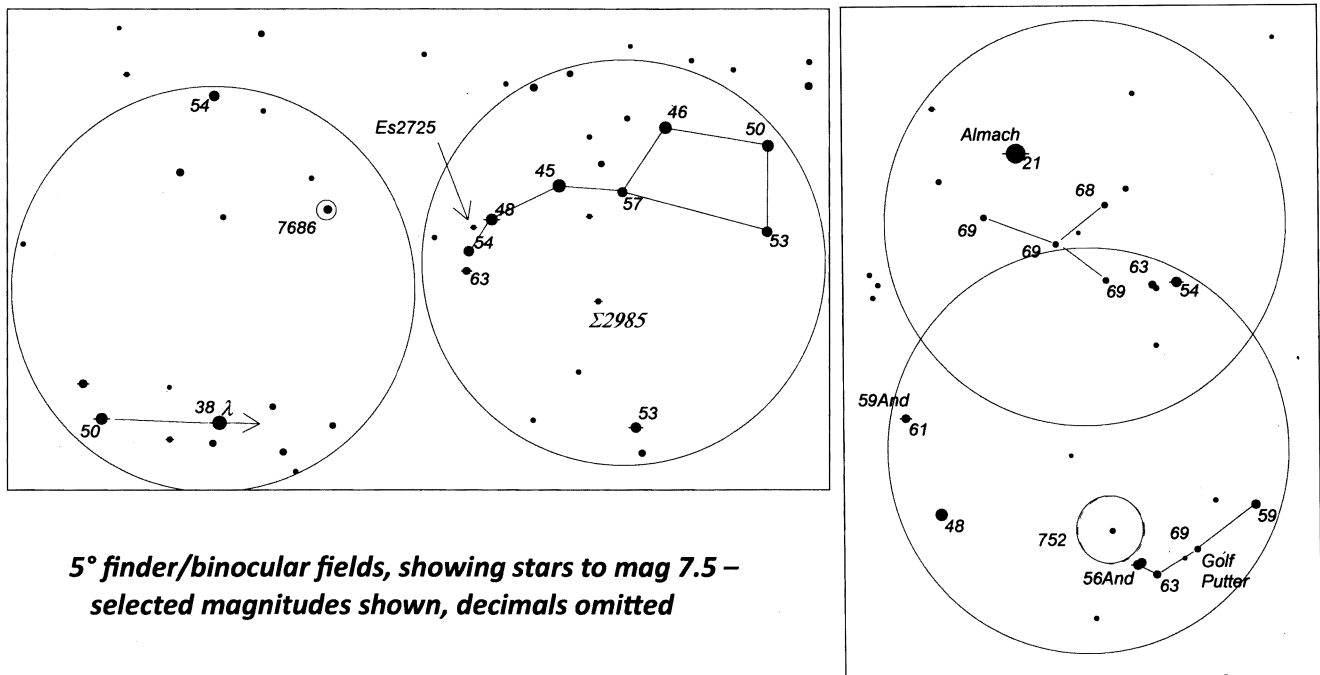
The Andromeda Galaxy (M31) is inevitably one of the first deep sky objects targeted by every newly-minted visual astronomer, and Almach (Gamma [γ] And) is deservedly one of the first color-contrast doubles they hunt down. But once they're done with those two targets, too many amateurs leave Andromeda behind. They're missing an awful lot of good stuff, as demonstrated by previous November issues of OGT, where we covered not only Almach and M31 but also red dwarf pair Groombridge 34; doubles h5451, h1911, O Σ 514, and Pi And; carbon stars AQ and SU And; the Blue Snowball nebula (NGC 7662); and the Home Plate and Van Gogh's Crow asterisms – every one of them a gem, and well worth the effort to visit from time to time.

This month, we'll check out a few more of the neglected treasures tucked away in this constellation, starting with a pair of good binocular targets: an open cluster and asterism near the east end of Andromeda's bright southern arc. The asterism, known as **The Golf Putter**, is 2° long and an easy catch just over 5° south of Almach. On the way there, you might pass by a mag 6.1 star, **59 Andromedae**, shown on the finderscope view on the next page. If you take a minute to put it in your eyepiece at 50x or so, you'll find that it's a subtly tinted pair, mag 6.1 and 6.8, separated by 17 arcseconds. The Golf Putter's head, **56 Andromedae**, is also a double star, but much wider – its yellow-orange mag 5.7 primary sits 190 arcseconds away from its mag 6.0 red-orange secondary. In the eyepiece, the pair can look completely unrelated, but it's a nice double for almost any binoculars.

*This month's targets,
showing stars to mag 5*



Once you've found The Golf Putter, look just beyond 56 And for the ball it's about to hit, **open cluster NGC 752**. It's big – 45 arcminutes wide – and glows at integrated magnitude 5.7. In binoculars or a finder, you'll see it as a large round spot of mist with a yellowish mag 7.1 star near its center. If you put it in the eyepiece at 40-50x it will blossom into dozens of loosely-gathered stars meandering through the field in twisted interlocking strands, punctuated by accidental geometric shapes. Spend some time exploring the pictures it's trying to show you.



**5° finder/binocular fields, showing stars to mag 7.5 –
selected magnitudes shown, decimals omitted**

When you've exhausted the mysteries of NGC 752, move over to the opposite corner of the constellation for our second neglected area, the north arm of a group of stars known as **Frederick's Glory**. In 1787, German astronomer Frederick Bode unsuccessfully proposed this group as a new constellation to honor Frederick the Great of Prussia. You can find it directly above the Great Square of Pegasus: look for a trio of mag 4 stars (Lambda [λ], Kappa [κ], and iota [ι] And), with a slightly brighter one (omicron [ο] And) off to the side.

With mag 3.8 Lambda near the south edge of a 5° finder field as shown above, you'll see a misty spot near the NW edge of the field, with a single prominent mag 6.2 orange star at its center. That's **open cluster NGC 7686**, although modern data indicate that it's not a gravitationally-bound cluster, just a chance alignment of unrelated stars. At integrated mag 5.6, it's about as bright as NGC 752 but much smaller, covering only 12 arcminutes of sky. Binoculars show the mag 6.2 star forming an isosceles triangle with two fainter yellow-orange stars (mag 7.7 and 8.9) over an unresolved mist; a telescope will reveal more discrete stars, but not much organization.

Panning 5° farther west brings us to another binocular asterism, **Pickard's Little Dipper**, coined by California amateur Bill Pickard. It's surprising, delightful, and pretty much self-explanatory. There are also a couple nice telescopic doubles nearby. Almost touching the dipper's handle is **Es2725**, from the double star lists compiled by T.E. Espin from 1901-1933. It's a colorful pair at low magnification (20x is plenty), with a white mag 7.3 primary 55 arcseconds away from a mag 8.6 red-orange companion. South of the figure, as if it had been poured out of the dipper's bowl, is **Struve (Σ) 2985**, which pairs a mag 7.2 yellow star with an ambiguously-colored mag 7.9 secondary 15 arcseconds away. It should split nicely at 50x. Different observers have described the secondary as everything from blue to orange. It reminds us that we don't all see the heavens in exactly the same way – a fitting thought to consider as we end our evening among the stars of Andromeda.