



PARI

PISGAH

ASTRONOMICAL

RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## Astro Advisory

*Notice of an upcoming  
astronomical event.*

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### VENUS, MARS AND MOON MEET IN THE EVENING SKY

**Rosman, NC (January 16, 2017)** – Have you been watching Venus, our “Evening Star,” shining so brightly in the west after sunset? If so, you may also have noticed a much fainter red-colored “star” just above it and moving slowly towards Venus. This is Mars. These two fascinating planets have been moving in formation close to each other since the first of the year and are still getting even closer each night. They will remain like this until early March when Venus suddenly dives into the evening twilight.

Astronomers at the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute have been aiming their telescopes at these planets during every public observing session in which they have had clear skies. They note that on the evening of January 31, a waxing crescent moon will join Venus and Mars. They will be just to the south of the Great Square of Pegasus the flying horse.

This triangle of Venus, Mars and the moon will be a fleeting event since the moon will continue its monthly path around the sky and leave Venus and Mars behind. On March 1 the moon will once again join these planets in the evening sky. However, by that time Venus will have started that plunge into the sunset and will be significantly lower than Mars and the moon than on January 31. Also, by that time, all three of these solar system objects will have moved to the east of the Great Square of Pegasus.

Venus, Mars and the moon are three of the seven so-called classical planets. The others are Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn and the Sun. (Yes, the ancients considered the Sun to be a planet since it moved through the zodiac constellations. It is, of course, a star, not a planet in the modern sense.) Our seven days of the week are named after the seven classical planets.

Happy observing!

#### About PARI

PARI is a public not-for-profit public foundation established in 1998. Located in the Pisgah National Forest southwest of Asheville, NC, PARI offers STEM educational programs at all levels, from K-12 through post-graduate research. For more information about PARI and its programs, visit [www.pari.edu](http://www.pari.edu).

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