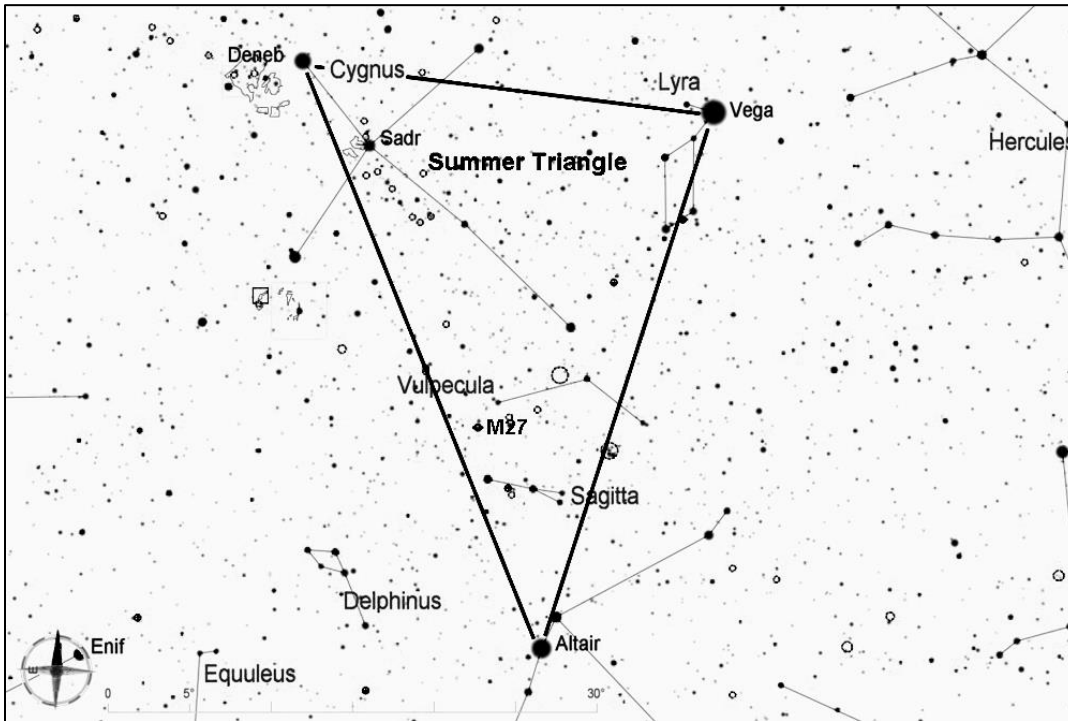


## Messier 30, Globular Cluster in Capricornus

Messier 30 is a nice open cluster, about magnitude 7. Through an amateur telescope of modest size, many of its stars can be resolved, and there are two strings of bright stars stretching to the north. The center of the cluster is very dense. The cluster is about 26,000 light years away.



Start by finding the Summer Triangle, which consists of the three of the brightest stars in the sky--Vega, Deneb, and Altair. The Summer Triangle is high overhead throughout the summer, and it sinks lower in the west as fall progresses.

For this star hop, start from Altair in the constellation Aquila, the eagle.

From Altair, follow the stars that form the upper edge of Aquila the eagle's east wing, and use these stars as a pointer to take you to the constellation Capricornus. To me, the stars of Capricornus form a large, open-mouthed smile. Once you locate Capricornus, look for  $\zeta$  (Zeta), a magnitude 3.8 star in the lower left portion of the smile shape. From  $\zeta$ , M30 is just over 3 degrees to the east.

