

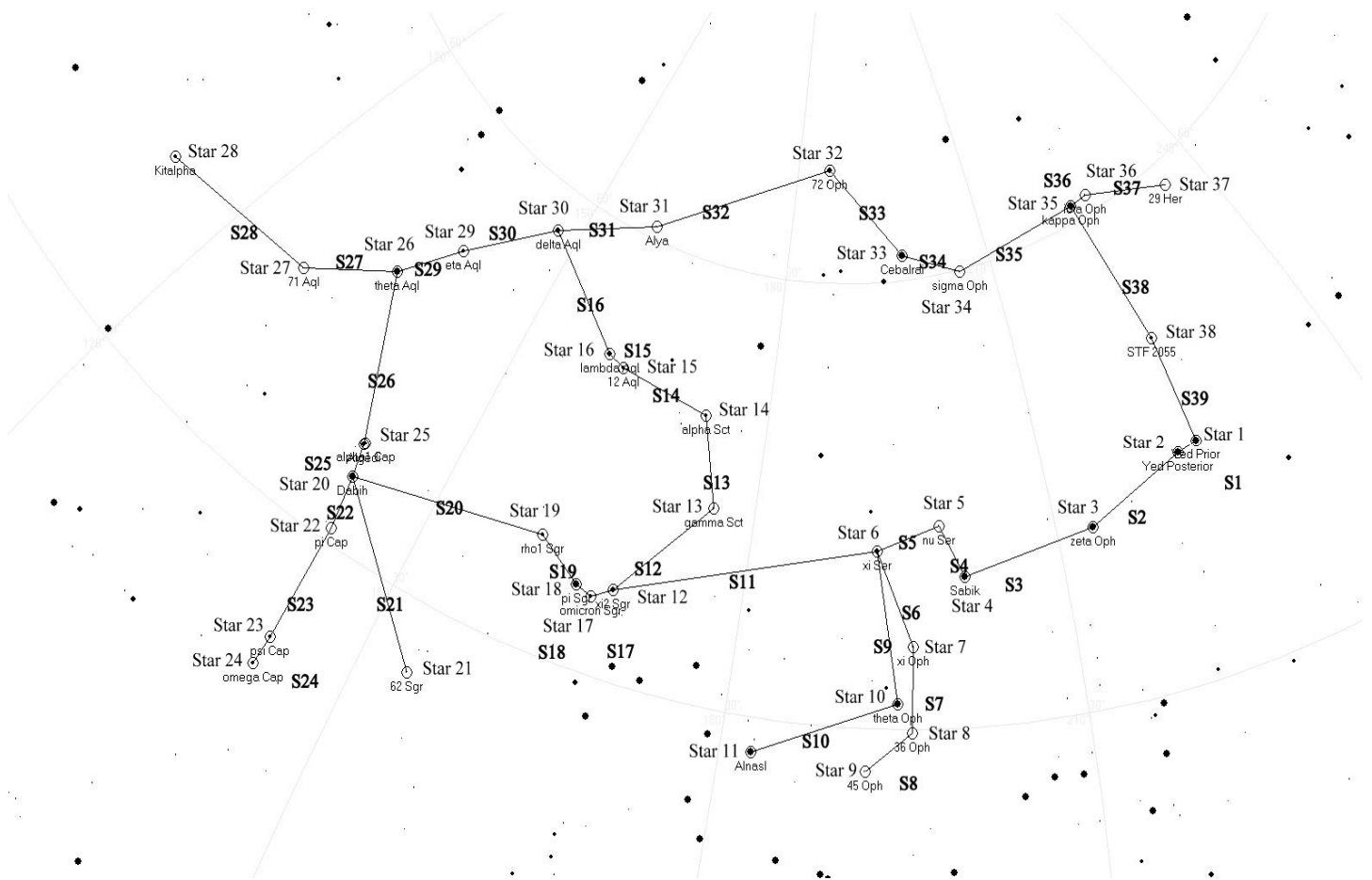


THE STATE OF TEXAS ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE DAY FOUNDATION  
***THE TEXAS BISON STUDENT STUDY GROUP JOURNAL***

***“The Great Texas Old Blue Bison Constellation”***

By

Dr. Andrew Kerr



**THE GREAT TEXAS “OLD BLUE” BISON CONSTELLATION STAR MAP**

The STAR DAY Foundation of El Paso, Texas is pioneering and leading a Texas history and science project to inspire and motivate students to explore and discover the exciting history and science of the Texas Plains Bison whose ancestors where the ancient bison of China who migrated across the Bering Land Bridge to modern Alaska and Canada nearly 100,000 years ago then down to the upper states and finally arriving in the Texas Plains approximately 25,000 years ago. From time to time its fun to add a bit of legend to help students visualize history and science as the ancient people did all over the world to tell their stories by creating constellations and land monuments linked to their constellations that we recognize today.

The Texas Bison Student Study Group (The Group) sponsored by The STAR DAY Foundation was organized on September 12, 2010 in partnership with Presidio ISD Lucy Rede Franco Middle School under the supervision of School Principal Teresa Porras with the volunteer support of science teachers, parents and students as an after-school student enrichment program. The Group pioneered and led a Texas legislative initiative in 2011 that successfully designated the Goodnight Bison Herd (The Herd) at Caprock Canyons State Park as “The Official State Bison Herd of Texas.” Governor Rick Perry, a 1999 STAR DAY Founder, issued a “Commendation Letter” to honor and recognize The Group for their service achievement of merit in enhancing the story of Texas for the people of Texas.

The Group proposed the project sponsored by The STAR DAY Foundation to pioneer and lead an effort to create a legend based in history and science about the Texas Plains Bison in partnership The Marian Blakemore Planetarium in Midland, Texas and members of the West Texas Astronomy Club which meets at the Planetarium each month.

“Old Blue” was a unique and legendary longhorn steer that Charles Goodnight (1836-1929) used many times to lead a large herd of longhorn steers from the Texas Panhandle on dusty trails to a northern railhead for shipment to east coast markets. The Constellation is an attempt to adapt the story of “Old Blue” of a legendary longhorn steer on the land to a story of “Old Blue” a legendary spirit bison in the sky.

Mary Ann (Molly) Goodnight (1839-1926) with the help of her husband Charles Goodnight (1836-1929) helped save the last free-roaming Texas Plains Bison from extinction in the late 1800’s. The surviving 80 animals of Goodnight Bison Herd (The Herd) today are now maintained by the Official State Bison Herd of Texas management team of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at Caprock Canyons State Park in Briscoe County under the supervision of the Park Superintendent Donald Beard.

The Great Texas “Old Blue” Bison Constellation is composed of 254 stars, one for each Texas County. The Constellation is illustrated above by 38 generally visible framework stars high in the sky in the southern sky rising in September each year. The 38 framework stars form 39 constellation segments as depicted in the diagram.

The Constellation represents a Texas Plains Bison named “Old Blue” roaming free across the night sky forever. Each star trailing “Old Blue” represents the historical spirit of each Texas Plains Bison that once roamed free on the land that is the State of Texas today over thousands and thousands of years. Each spirit bison is a member of The Great Texas “Old Blue” Bison Herd.

A new “Old Blue” legend has now emerged. “Old Blue” as depicted by The Constellation shall rise on each “Texas Blue Moon” night in the future and lead The Herd across the night sky

to new feeding grounds in one of four (4) Sky Valleys around the celestial sphere to the east of The Constellation. The first Sky Valley just east of The Constellation has been designated by The Group as “The Mary Ann (Molly) Goodnight Sky Valley” and is the home of The Great Texas “Old Blue” Bison Herd of spirit bison.



**NOVEMBER 14, 2011–THE MARIAN BLAKEMORE PLANETARIUM–MIDLAND, TEXAS**–Dr. Andrew Kerr, Curator (Back Row, Second From Left) of The Marian Blakemore Planetarium, and the members of the West Texas Astronomers (WTA) Club announced completion of the first phase of **THE GREAT TEXAS “OLD BLUE” BISON CONSTELLATION PROJECT (The Project).**” Seated Front: Love Swimming Bear; L to R: Frances Gonzales, Bruce Moore, Sara Moore, Daryl Lane, Charles Hemann, Michael Hemann, Harry Harrison, Andrew Kerr, Mike Jacquez, Dennis Edwards, Greg Johnson, Al Smith, Don Eckerty, Jim Camp. The picture was taken by WTA Club Member Craig Patterson.

To commemorate the migration of The Herd across the night sky led by “Old Blue” from one Sky Valley to the next Sky Valley on the night of a “Texas Blue Moon”, The STAR DAY Foundation shall plan, develop and conduct THE GREAT TEXAS “OLD BLUE” BISON

SYMPHONY CONCERT (The Concert)” featuring Texas music, song and dance as a fundraising event. The Concert event shall feature noted Texas musicians, singers and partnering school band and choir students. In addition, the theme of The Concert shall always feature a tribute in music, song and dance of Native America Indians who hunted Texas Plains Bison over the ages. On that night students and adults across Texas and elsewhere may wish to join-in as Great Texas “Old Bison” Riders in the Sky” to dance and run with The Herd.

The first concert shall be planned for Friday, July 31, 2015 at 8PM in a hosting Texas City in partnership with a local Television Station. Tickets to attend the live event shall be offered as a Donation Premium. The STAR DAY Foundation shall seek to partner with one or more corporate sponsors to produce and present the live in-person concert and as a live Internet fundraising event. A DVD audio/video recording of The Concert shall be offered at The STAR DAY Foundation’s emerging website as a Donation Premium to support the conservation, preservation and restoration efforts of the Official State Bison of Texas management team to help **“SAVE THE OFFICIAL STATE BISON HERD OF TEXAS---A STATE OF TEXAS TREASURE!”** for the people of Texas.

**Editor’s Note:** Dr. Andrew Kerr is the Curator of the Marian Blakemore Planetarium in Midland, Texas and Project Director of THE GREAT TEXAS “OLD BLUE” BISON CONSTELLATION PROJECT sponsored by The STAR DAY Foundation. The STAR DAY Foundation was established in 1999 as a Texas nonprofit 501(c)3 tax exempt organization with a primary mission to carryout the legislative intent of the STAR DAY bill passed in 1999 in partnership Texas schools and other organizations by celebrating each year the birthday of the State of Texas on February 19<sup>th</sup> to inspire and motivate students to explore and discover the founding and founders of the State of Texas at partnering schools.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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