Fun Facts:

**M103: OPEN CLUSTER**

Computer Code:

* **Other Names:**
  + NGC 581
* **Location:**
  + RA: 01h 34m 5s
  + Dec: 60⁰ 44’
* **Basics:**
  + Description: open cluster in Cassiopeia
  + Visual Magnitude: +7.40
    - In binoculars it is visible as a nebulous, fan-shaped patch. It is harder to identify in telescopes because its association is loose and irregular and may be confused with other clusters in the vicinity.
  + Apparent Size: 5.0 arcminutes
  + Distance: 8,000 to 9,500 light years away, one of the most distant open clusters that we know about.
    - Member stars are about 15 light years apart
  + Diameter: 10.4 light years across
* **History:**
  + First discovered by 1781 by Pierre Mechain, a friend of Charles Messier.
  + This was the last object Messier added to his original catalog. (M104 – M110 were all added posthumously.)
* **Other Notes:**
  + It is about 25 million years old, which is fairly young for a star cluster. It contains many young, blue hydrogen-burning giant stars.
  + It is an arrowhead-shaped cluster.
  + It contains at least 172 stars, but there may be as many as 1,000 or more stars clustered together.
  + Views of it are dominated by a pretty double star, Struve 131, but that binary star is not actually a member of the cluster.