

Easter's date depends on the cycle of the moon

Easter — that movable religious holiday whose date varies according to the vicissitudes of the moon — that year will fall on April 18, notes University of Michigan astronomer Hazel M. Losh.

Easter is designated as the Sunday following the first full moon that comes after the vernal equinox, which this year was March 20. Prof. Losh explains.

She points out that in 325 A.D. church fathers gathered in Nicea (University of Constantinople) and decreed the rule for establishing the date of Easter. She adds that one reason for the method might be to afford bright moonlight for sale pilgrimages' attendance upon Easter's celebration.

Because of the dependence on the phases of the moon, however, the date fluctuates widely," she continues. "In 1941 for example, Easter came on the latest date possible, April 25, that won't happen again until 2238. But March 29 is the most unusual date its occurrence in 1940 being only the second since the Gregorian calendar reform of 1582 — and there won't be another March 21 Easter until 2391.

THE U-M astronomer says one of the most ancient and famous superstitions her

cules can be spotted in April. Resembling a giant letter "II" it can be found in the northeast between Corona Borealis and the bright star Vega.

To help in identifying Hercules, look for four stars that form a keystone," she notes. "This keystone contains the great globular star cluster, a fine telescopic object." Visible to the naked eye as a dim, misty patch of diffused light, the cluster is about 15,000 light-years from Earth and is believed to contain as many as 500,000 stars as bright as our sun.

To the south are the constellation Hydra the Water Snake and Corvus the Crow.

Hydra, the longest constellation in the

sky, sprawls some 90 degrees across the south below Virgo and Leo," Prof. Losh says. "It is closely connected to Hercules in that, according to legend, he is trying to slay this terrible creature." The brightest star in Hydra is Alphard, the "Solitary One." Change in color and alone in its position of the heavens, Alphard can be easily located in the heart of the reptile, she says.

PEARLING IN the southeast is the striking little lopsided figure, Corvus," she notes. "Composed of five stars, three of which are very bright, Corvus is supposedly pecking away at Hydra.

April is also the time of year to see the midday light, she comments.

"The faint triangle of light may be seen if you're lucky in the west after sunset on a clear, moonless night," she says. "It is called midday light because it follows the path of the ecliptic and passes through zodiacal constellations." Broad at the base, the light tapers into darkness toward the zenith. It is believed to be slightly reflected by interplanetary dust concentrated most heavily in the plane of the ecliptic.

"Of all the planets," Prof. Losh says, Mars and Saturn are the easiest to observe in April. Both are found slightly west of the meridian at sunset and will shine in the western sky until around midnight. East of Mars, Saturn is somewhat brighter than the red planet.

Community effort aids Channel 56

Center stage in the call issued daily for amateurs and pros during the WTWS-Channel 56 auction which winds up Saturday.

The auction—held annually to raise funds for Detroit's public television station—was held on camera Monday night by community volunteers.

Among this year's lineup of celebrity auctioneers are six Observer & Eccentric editorial employees. Appearing cameras during the final auction days are Canton Township editor Richard Gidd from 3:30-5:30 p.m., Thursday, and Farmington editor Steve Harris from 4:30-6 p.m. on Saturday.

While waters usually shine best in front of a reporter, Southfield editor Mike Miller and columnist Corinne Abatt and W.W. Eddie Edgar were talented auctioneers on April 5. Creative Lansing editor Patricia Beach Smith lost her appearance eye and vice to the auction boards on April 6.

The turnout on talent will be carried a step further when the high bidder for a day is an Observer & Eccentric reporter takes his or her flag as an acquiring journalist.

Bids will be taken every day between 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. around midnight by calling 822-2340 with the auction board and your bid, the firm number, your bid and your name on a telephone number.

Auction proceeds finance almost one-third of Channel 56's operating revenue. Each week, auction clerks set the goal over the go-a-vote's total. That means all the credits roll just after midnight Saturday for the great community effort they hope the total will top \$128,345.

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Youth forum set April 19

Oakland County residents can air their comments on the needs and problems of juveniles served by the juvenile justice system at one of 12 forums sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice Services.

The public forum slated from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. April 19 in the Royal Oak city library auditorium will provide a means to identify both problem areas and potential members for task forces which will assist in writing a comprehensive plan and budget.

The office has been directed to develop a comprehensive plan for the state. To do this, we need a representative cross section of opinions from children, parents, students, police, judges, private agencies and dozens of other groups that deal with youth or young's want to be heard," said William J. Holby, commission chairman.

The plan will provide long range guidance in services, detention, physical facilities, procedures to prevent delinquency and neglect, and uniform administration of juvenile justice services.

Philips had about \$100 million in spent in this area each year, but the system is often fragmented.

The lawyers and expertise are in the field in the service delivery network, said Holby. "Those people and agencies working with juveniles understand the problems and input from them will be like a breath of fresh air in a system that really needs it."

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