eap year means longer wait for Spring

Seponial writer

SKYGAZERS in February will be treated to a variety of cyents.

The two brightest planets in the sky, Venus and Jupiler, continuous to draw closer to each other. There will be a conjunction (close grouping) belivere Mars and Saturn. There will be some excellent opportunities to find faint Uranus by using Mars and Saturn, and the Fleiades star cluster will be acculted (covered) by the moon.

star cluster will be acculted (covered) by the moon.
February is the shortest month of
the year, usually containing only 28
days. People often wonder why one
month should be so short when all
the other months are 30 or 31 days

long.
February could have had 30 days
if one day had been taken from January and another from March, resulting in three consecutive months of 30
days. The reason is politics in
Roman times.
The ancien Roman calendar originally began with the month of
March and ended with February, 11
was an imperfect calendar and, over long.

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skywatch

the course of many craturies, had gotten out of synchronization with the seasons. Calendar reform was badly needed.

The calendar would have been much easier to deal with if our year (the time it the seasons). There could be 12 months, each having 30 days long. There could be 12 months, each having 30 days to complete its ortil and those extra 5.28 days completed matters.

Here needed to be only 29 days to add up to a total of 365. February would have its full 30 days only once every four years to allow for leap year.

Pleased with the results, Julius Caesar named one of the months 'July' to honor himself.

Sugustus, who felt that he was entitled have a month and for the days well, hence the month August. But because August followed a month of 1 days, it had only 30 days of its

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"July" to honor himself.

His successor was his nephew Augustus, who felt that he was entitled to have a month named for him as well, hence the month August. But because August followed a month of 31 days, it had only 30 days of its own. Believing he was every bit as good as Julius, Augustus decided that his month should have just amany days as July, so he took one day from February and added it to August.

tunately that makes it one day more to spring!

THE LENGTH OF the day in-creases by one hour and 14 minutes this month.

On Feb. 1, the sun rose at 7:46 a.m.
and set at 5:45 pm., allowing for a possible nine hours and 59 minutes of sunlight. On Feb. 29, the sun rises at 7:08 a.m. and sets at 6:21 pm., giving us a possible 11 hours and 13 minutes of sunlight.

Morrling planets this month are Mars and Saturn. Mars has a definite reddish color while Saturn looks more yellowish.

It will also be possible to find the

It will also be possible to find the planet Uranus by using Saturn on Feb. 13 and Mars on Feb. 22 and 23.

Feb. 13 and Mars on Feb. 22 and 23.

The evening planets this month are Venus and Jupiter. Venus is the brilliant "star" in the west-southwestern sky. Thirty-three degrees to the upper left of Venus is the glant planet Jupiter. Only two objects in the sky are brighter than these two planets: the sun and the moon.

cent of the light it receives from the sun and because it is also a close neighbor of the earth. Jupiter's atmosphere reflects about 73 percent of the light it gets from the sun. Jupiter is much far-ther away than Venus, but it is the largest planet in the solar system rargest planet in the solar system and its size allows it to reflect a lot of light.

FULL MOON was on Feb. 2. The moon rises in the east, as the sun sets in the west, and is visible all night. Venus and Jupiter will be 26 degrees apart on the evening of Feb. 7. Watch Venus get closer to Jupiter during the month.

Last quarter moon is on Feb. 10.

Feb. 11. The moon is approaching Antares on Feb. 11, has passed Antares and is approaching Mars on Feb. 12, and is below Mars and Saturn on Feb. 13, in fact the moon, Mars, and Saturn form a nice triangle on Feb. 13.

Uranus can be located on Feb. 13 by using Saturn as a guide. Find Saturn in the south southeast, about 45 minutes before sunrise. (Mars is six degrees above and the the west (right) of Saturn.

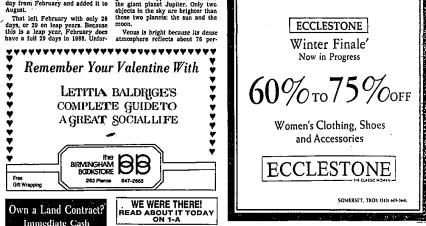
in the west, and is visible all right.

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NOTICE THE Saturn-Mars-Antares are again on the morning of





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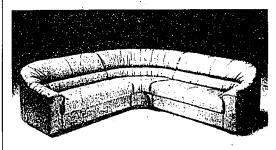
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