## How can we tell it's officially spring?

PRING officially arrives for the northern hemisphere at

PRING officially arrives for the northern hemisphere at 4:30 am. Sunday, March 20. The "official" start of a spring often puzzles people. What determines the precise moment? The answer is the position of the sun with respect to a line called the celettial equator. The earth's equator is a line that divides our planet into northern and southern hemispheres. When this equator line is extended out into space, it's called the celestial equator, and it divides the sky into two hemispheres as well.

EARTH ORBITS the sun, but our planet's axis is tilted 23.5 degrees so the sun may appear as much as 23.5 degrees above the celestial equator.

In June the sun is at its highest above the equator, because the earth's northern hemisphere is tilted its most toward the sun, and we have summer. In December the sun is at its lowest point and we have winter. Obviously there are two points where the sun's pathway crosses the celestial equator.

### Collegiate essavists to compete

Michigan college students can compete for \$1,000 prize money in an essay contest sponsored by the Detroit Chapter of Women in Communications. The group is celebrations to like in the 21st century" are to be 750 words or less in length. They will be judged on originality, creativity and grammar by a panel of area writers and editors.

To obtain an entry form or for more information, call \$72-552 or more information, call \$72-552 or wile Student Essay Contest, 10816 W. Warren, Dearborn, Mit 68126.

Entries must be postmarked by April 22 and must be accompanied by an entry form. The winner will be notified June 6.



#### skywatch

spring, and equinox means equanight."

The length of the day is nearly
equal to the length of night during
this time. On the vernal equinox, the
sun rises due east and sets due west.
We are rather shortsighted in calling it the "vernal" equinox. We may
be starting spring in the northern
hemisphere, but the people below the
equator are starting autum.

Watch the crescent moon pass Justice and Venus starting the evening
of March 19. The moon is below and
to the right of Jupiter.

to the right of Jupiter.

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AND EXHIBIT SPACE

When the sun is traveling from its low point toward its high point, it crosses the celestial equator moving from south to north. The precise moment the sun crosses that line is the official start of spring.

THE POINT of crossing has a special name — vernal equinor. Vernal is the Latin word for spring, and equinox means "equal to the length of night during this time. On the vernal equinor, the sun rises due east and sets due west.

We are rather shortsighted in calling it the "creaml" equinor. We may be starting spring in the northern hemisphere, but the people below the equator are starting autumn. Watch the creaseen moon pass Jupiter and Venus starting the evening of March 19. The moon is below and of March 19. The moon is fellow and of March 19. The moon is helped group of stairs. This is the left of the Pileades on the evening it the "creaml" equinor. We may be starting spring in the northern watch the crease of the creamler should be supported to the pileades on the evening it the "creaml" equinor. We may be starting spring in the northern watch the cream of the properties of the pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades on the evening of the 22nd 70 the left of the Pileades

FIRST QUARTER Moon is at 11:41 a.m. on March 24. The moon is

one-quarter of its way around the earth.

The moon is in the constellation Gernial on the evening of the March 25, forming a triangle with the stars Castor and Pollux. Castor is at the top of the triangle, and Pollux is at the lower left.

Each star marks one of the heads

of the "twins" On the next night the three objects form a straight line.

The moon is above Regulus again on the evening of the 28th, and is below and to the left of Regulus on the evening of the 28th, and is below and to the left of Regulus on the cret evening.

Venus and Jupiter are 23 degrees apart on the evening of the 31st. Venus is only three degrees below the

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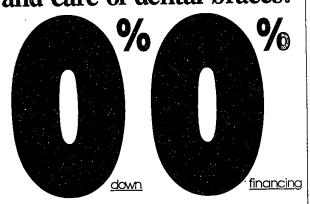
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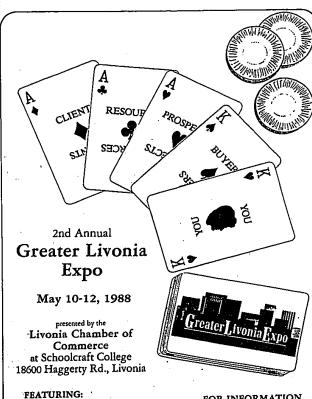
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