

Mars, 'Hunter's Moon' provide fall show

THE MOON is located directly above the red planet, Mars, on the evening of Oct. 22. Mars is exceptionally well-placed for observing this autumn.

Full moon is at 12:35 a.m. on Oct. 25. This is the full moon that follows the September Harvest Moon, so it's called the "Hunter's Moon." The Hunter's Moon provided additional light for hunters who were out after sunset.

Mercury is at its maximum elongation (apparent distance) from the sun on the morning of Oct. 28. It is 18 degrees west (left) of the sun and can be seen rising in the east southeast about 45 minutes before the sun.

Mercury is about 19 degrees below and to the left of Venus, and about



skywatch
Raymond E. Bullock

eight degrees above the horizon. The week before and after this elongation will be the best time to find Mercury in the morning sky in 1988.

Even at its best, Mercury is close to the horizon. Binoculars will help you find the planet in the glow of morning twilight.

LOOK FOR THE MOON, IN TAURUS, about two hours after sunset on the

26th. The Pleiades star cluster is located directly below the moon. Closer to the horizon is Jupiter. On the following night, the moon is to the north (left) of Jupiter.

Mars ends retrograde (backward) motion Oct. 23. Mars has been drifting westward through the constellation of Pisces for the past two months.

Retrograde motion is an optical illusion. Planets can not actually reverse their motion. Generally planets move from west to east through the stars. When the faster moving Earth passes a slower moving planet, such as Mars, that planet appears to drift backward.

After a while the illusion ends, and the planet resumes its eastward movement. Careful observers will now note Mars moving eastward from night to night, as it heads for the constellation of Aries.

THE MOON is approaching Castor and Pollux once again Oct. 29. On the following night, five hours after sunset, it forms a line with those two stars.

Daylight Saving Time comes to an end at 2 a.m. on Oct. 29. Clocks must be set back one hour.

Daylight time always ends on the last Sunday in October. We do not alter the speed of Earth's rotation or the length of the day; we merely alter the device by which time is measured.

A little more than 100 years ago, there were no standardized time zones. Everyone kept "local" time. "Noontime" was when the sun was due south and the shadow cast by a stick was at its shortest.

Of course, local noon in Detroit was different from noon in Lansing, which was different from Grand

Rapids, and so on. At one time, Michigan had 27 local time zones.

Railroads were having an impossible time scheduling their arrivals and departures. In 1883 the railroads divided the country into four main time zones. These standard time zones were not immediately accepted by all the public, but over the course of years standard time became the norm.

It wasn't until 35 years later that Congress, acting in its usual hasty manner, made the standard time zones the law of the land.

A vote of the people of Michigan placed our state in the Eastern zone so it would share the same time with businesses on the east coast.

If we stayed on daylight time, sunrise at the end of this month would be at 8:04 a.m. and sunset at 6:28 p.m. On standard time, sunrise is at 7:04 a.m. and sunset is at 5:26 p.m. We lose our later sunset and extra hour of daylight in the evening but gain an earlier sunrise and extra hour of light in the morning.

An excellent aid for keeping in time with the sky and learning the constellations is the monthly "Sky Calendar." A one-year subscription is \$6 and is available from Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University, East Lansing 48824.

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Filed by the Circuit Judge Kuhn at Court of Appeals Committee, 1530 N. Woodward, Suite 200, Birmingham, MI 48011

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