

We've got highlights for May heavens

By Raymond E. Bullock
special writer

Highlights for May skywatchers will include the continued opportunity to see Mercury. There also will be a meteor shower and the return of Venus to the evening sky.

The amount of sunlight we receive will increase by 58 minutes in May. On May 1, sunrise is at 6:27 a.m. and sunset is at 8:32 p.m., allowing for 14 hours and five minutes of sun. On May 31, these times are 5:58 a.m. and 9:01 p.m., for a possible 15 hours and three minutes of sunshine.

Face west on the evening of May 1 and you'll see Jupiter, looking like a very bright star. Look below and to the left of Jupiter for Aldebaran (a DEB a ram), the orange-red "eye" of Taurus the bull. Below and to the right of Jupiter is Mercury. Using binoculars, trace a line from Jupiter,

past Mercury, and you'll come to the Pleiades (PLEE a dees) star cluster. The Pleiades, marking the "shoulder" of Taurus, looks like a tiny dipper. By the end of May none of these objects will be visible.

The Eta Aquarid (a QUAIR id) meteor shower reaches its maximum during the pre-dawn hours of May 4. This is not one of the year's best displays; about 20 meteors ("falling stars") can be seen each hour. This is an average of only one every three minutes, which is still more than what is usually visible during any given night. The meteors will appear to radiate from the constellation of Aquarius (hence the name of the shower), which will be rising in the south before sunrise. Binoculars are not needed to see a meteor shower. Just relax in a lawn chair, look toward Aquarius, and be very patient.

skywatch

JUPITER IS four degrees north of Aldebaran on the evening of the 4th. Look about 20 minutes after sunset and you'll see a triangle formed by Jupiter, Aldebaran and Mercury. Look below Mercury, close to the horizon, for Venus. You will need binoculars, and an unobstructed horizon, to see Venus. By the end of the month Venus will be easier to see.

The new moon is at 7:45 a.m. on May 5. The moon is located between the earth and the sun and is not visible. You might be able to see the moon as a very thin crescent 20 minutes after sunset on May 5. Use bi-

noculars and look to the right of Venus.

It will be much easier to see the crescent moon on the evening of May 8. You'll see it about five degrees immediately to the right of Jupiter. Two degrees below the moon is Mercury.

Watch the changing positions of the moon during the next three nights.

On the 7th the moon is 11 degrees above Jupiter. On the 8th the moon is just a few degrees to the right of Mars. A triangle is formed by the moon, Castor and Pollux (the "twin" stars) in Gemini on the 9th. Watch

Mars change its position, with respect to Castor and Pollux, during the month. The motion of a planet is very obvious when compared to bright stars.

The moon is at first quarter phase at 10:19 a.m. on May 12. The moon is one-quarter of its way around the earth. It will rise about noon and set around midnight.

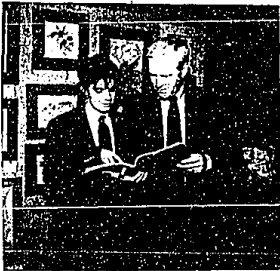
MERCURY IS officially stationary on the evening of the 12th. It has been drifting eastward through the stars of Aries, but has reached the point in its orbit where it will begin to move between the earth and the sun. Mercury will appear to stop its eastward movement and go westward, back toward the sun. Westward movement is known as retrograde (backward) motion.

Look for the moon on the evening

of the 12th. It is approaching the bright star Regulus (REG u lus) in Leo. At about 2 a.m. on May 13, the moon passes less than one-half of a degree above Regulus. This is an extremely close conjunction (grouping). Had the moon passed in front of Regulus, and covered the star, the event would be called an occultation. An occultation does actually occur, but you'll have to be in New Guinea to see it happen.

Raymond Bullock, an Oakland University graduate, was employed at Cranbrook Institute of Science for 11 years and worked as coordinator of the Planetarium and Observatory for seven years. He is currently employed by Image Engineering Corp., a company that specializes in laser displays and effects.

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Oakland probate judge elected to national board

Oakland County Probate Judge Barry M. Grant has been elected to the Board of Directors of the National College of Probate Judges which is the only national organization of probate judges.

Judge Grant is the first probate judge from the Detroit metropolitan area to have ever been elected to this board.

He is a member of the Michigan

Judicial Tenure Commission and is chairman of the Beaumont Hospital Research Institute.

Judge Grant is immediate past president of the Michigan Probate Judges Association. He is married and has three children, Jim, Nancy, and Scott. Judge Grant graduated from Wayne State University Law School and was a former assistant prosecuting attorney.



Judge Barry M. Grant

'Big C' fight door-to-door

Oakland County volunteers are joining these throughout metropolitan Detroit to raise money door-to-door for the American Cancer Society. They will be knocking on doors through May 8.

This year, volunteers will distribute a pamphlet called "Eat Right," with tips on how good choices at the grocery store may help cut risks of cancer.

In Oakland County, about 10,000 volunteers will try to hit 250,000 homes with literature and requests for donations. Oakland County's goal is \$315,000 of the \$540,000 they hope

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