Moon does more than just play a role in romance



There will be no moon on Thursday. Now, don't panic; the moon isn't going to fall out of the sky. There's al-ways one day each month when there is when there is "no" moon. It's more commonly known as "new"

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not have the same significance as the new moon phase does for many cultures.
The moon will be in the constellation of Tairus the bull on the vening of the 18th. The 'aye' of Tairus, marked by the orange-red star Aldebaran (al DEB a ran), will be located below and to the left of the moon will be the bull's "shoulder," marked by the end to the right of the moon will be the bull's "shoulder," marked by the Pleiades (PLEB a dees) atar cluster. The Pleiades, which looks like a tiny "dipper," will be easier to spot with binocultars.

Notice how much the moon moves in just one night; on the following evening (Fab. 19) the moon will have moved 12 degrees (24 moon diameters) and passed Aldebaran.

Mercury will be at inferior conjunction on the 20th. The planet will be located between the earth and the sun and will not be visible. The only planet now visible in the sky will be Jupiter, and you will have to be up before sunrise to see it in the south southwest.

Notice the bright red star below and to the right of the moon on the evening of the same name that starred Michael Keaton. The name means "Betelguuse is also known as Al-me Oriente it to the hards harden of the Clother in the hards."

marks that part of Orion's anato-my.
Betelgeuse is also known as Al-pha Orionis; it is the brightest star in Orion, hence it was given the first letter of the Greek alpha-bet. Betelgeuse is the 11th bright-est star in the sky, and it is one of the largest known. If placed where the sun is, Betelgeuse would easi-ly extend beyond the orbit of Mars.

Nextens beyond the orbit of Mars.
Estimates of the diameter vary from 550 to 920 times the size of the sun. The star cortainly doesn't look like a giant because of its distance; it's believed to be about 520 light years away from us. That means the light we see tonight left Betelgeuse around the year 1474. (And of course EVERYONE knows that was one year after the birth of Copemicus!)

ERYONE knows that was one year after the birth of Copernical or the birth of Copernical or the beautiful of the beautiful of the sun, as seen from the earth, and will not be visible. The planet will be located behind the sun, as seen from the earth, and will not be visible. The most will be found within The most will be found within the wind of the sun, as seen from the beautiful of the planet of the plan

p.m. Full moon phase will occur at 8:15 p.m. on Feb. 25.
The February full moon went by several names; some Native American Indians called it the Snow Moon, to others it was the Snow Moon, to others it was the Hunger Moon, still others named it the Wolf Moon. The full moon will have passed Regulus and will be in this area of the sky that the sun will be rising in less than a meanth when raying actives.

month when spring arrives.

The planet Venus officially will

be in the evening sky at the end of the month, although it will be visible with difficulty. Try looking along the horizon, midway between due west and west southwest, with binoculars around 6x6 p.m. The glow of evening twilight will make finding Yenus a chailenge; the fact that the planet will be only four degrees above the horizon will add to the challenge. Yenus will become better placed for easy viewing in March and will

remain in the evening sky through Soptember.
Jupiter, which has been drifting slewly eastward through the stars of Libra, will be stationary on Feb. 28 and then begin retrograde ("backward") motion. During the next four months the planet will drift 10 degrees (20 moon diameters) westward, croseing into Virgo. This "backward" motion is an optical illusion, caused when the faster moving earth passes be-

tween slower moving Jupiter and the sun.

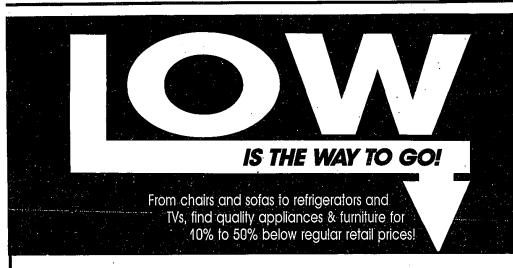
One hour and 30 minutes before the official end of February (10:30 p.m.), you will find the moon rising in the east southeast. "Riding" the moon, like a "cowperson" on a horse, will be the star Spica. Spica will be EXTREMELY close to the moon, near the moon's upper left edge. [Don't fret about a collision Spica is a good 275 light years away.)

The bright glare of the moon will make seeing Spica difficult with the naked eye use binoculars and try to spot Spica without looking at the moon will NOT harm your eyes, but the moon Looking at the moon libe bright, and binoculars will magnify that brightness; that would certainly dazzle your eyes!

An excellent aid for learning constellations and keeping up to

'Sky Calendar,' available from Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University, East Lansing 4824. A one year subscription is

Raymond E. Bullock was for-merly associated with the Cran-brook Institute of Science. He now is an executive in a corporation working with lasers.



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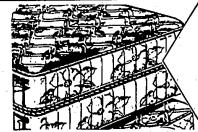
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