

# July taps memories for skywatchers

**SKY WATCH**  
**RAYMOND E. BULLOCK**

July promises to be a month with numerous conjunctions and alignments, "firsts," surprises and annularities. This is the first full moon of summer, which should come as no surprise to anyone. What may be a surprise is the weather. If the unseasonable heat in June is any indication of what's to come, we could be in for a sweltering July.

New Moon phase will occur at 6:57 p.m. on July 8. The moon will be located between the earth and the sun and will not be visible.

Venus and Regulus will be 1.5 degrees apart on the evening of the 9th. Look toward the west, 45 minutes after sunset, and you will find the planet located to the right of the star. On the following evening, Venus will be one degree above Regulus. Venus' motion during a single 24-hour period is very apparent when compared to the position of a "fixed" star.

An anniversary will be marked on July 9: The launching of Telstar, the first private telecommunications satellite, occurred in 1962. It was the precursor (or just "cousin," depending on your point of view) of today's telecommunications revolution.

Face west on the evening of the 11th and notice the waxing (growing) crescent moon. It will be located below the close grouping of Venus and Regulus. Tonight Venus will be above and slightly to the left of Regulus. By the end of the month, the two objects will be 18 degrees apart.

It was on July 11, 1979, that Skylab, NASA's first space station, reentered the earth's atmosphere with catastrophic results. The orbit of Skylab had been deteriorating, and NASA had hoped to use a space shuttle to boost it into a higher orbit. Alas, it was not to be. When Skylab entered the atmosphere it burned up. (Which is what will happen to Comet Shoemaker-Levy in Jupiter's atmosphere.)

Coming up in the next Skywatch: Jupiter and Comet Shoemaker-Levy have a close encounter of the catastrophic kind, the 25th anniversary of Apollo 11 and a meteor shower.

An excellent aid for learning constellations and keeping up to date with the sky is the monthly "Sky Calendar," available from Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 48824. A one year subscription is \$7.50.

Raymond E. Bullock, formerly associated with Cranbrook Institute of Science, is a Troy resident who is now in a leadership position with a company producing lasers.

# Engler won't back casino gambling

**BY TIM RICHARD STAFF WRITER**

Gov. John Engler won't support casino gambling at race tracks as a way of saving Michigan's \$2 billion horse industry.

"Casino gambling—I have reservations about it. I'm not a supporter of casino gambling," Engler said in a Southfield interview last week.

"Horse racing nationally is an industry that's in trouble. We've seen attendance at tracks all across America decline. Demographics have been working against the horse racing industry."

"Nelson Westrin (his appointee as racing commissioner) is doing a marvelous job bringing together everybody in the industry. For the first time in memory, the Michigan horse racing industry is coming together."

"They've put together quite an aggressive package. One aspect of it deals with casino gambling."

There are many, many other aspects which I think are important, supportable and do-able," the governor said.

But to track chiefs, such as Ladbroke DRC president John Long, casino gambling is the key to keeping horse racing—and its public and private dependants—afloat.

Long cancelled this year's running of the Michigan Mile, the state's richest running event, at the Livonia track. He said the track's handle has plummeted since casino gambling started across the Detroit River in Windsor in mid-May. And he has threatened to close the more than 40-year-old track next year without relief.

"Today's consumer wants continuous entertainment," Long said in a May 16 news conference.

Track owners put the importance of the industry at 40,000 jobs for track clerks, food service

workers, farms that grow feed, breeding farms, trainers, jockeys, drivers and animal attendants.

The \$20 million in taxes on pari-mutuel betting helps support county fairs, 4-H clubs and prizes for horses.

Engler's opposition says the industry will have an extremely tough sell in trying to get favorable action from the state Legislature in its election year.

Here is the kind of law that the horse racing industry is asking from the Legislature:

■ The racing commissioner, headquartered in Livonia, would regulate video gaming and new forms of horse race simulcasting.

■ Horse race meeting licenses would be expanded to include rights to inter-track (intrastate simulcasting), telephone betting and video gaming (slot machines).

■ Only tracks which preserved the same amount of racing dates this year as in 1993 will be eligible to install video gaming terminals (VGTs). One-third of the net income from VGTs will go to the state, yielding an estimated \$75 million to \$100 million a year (versus \$20 million currently from horse racing).

Affected are eight horse racing tracks. The big three are Ladbroke DRC in Livonia, Northville Downs and Hazel Park Raceway. Others are Jackson Raceway, Sports Creek Raceway (Swartz Creek, near Flint), Saginaw, Mt. Pleasant Meadows, and Muskegon Racecourse.

No bill number has been assigned. The bill likely will go to the House Agriculture Committee, the House Appropriations Committee or a select committee.


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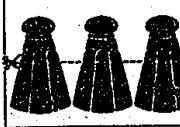
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