

# Lunar eclipse will greet Reagan's day in the sun

January's skies will provide a lunar eclipse and the mystery of three runaway stars, says University of Michigan astronomy Professor Richard G. Teske.

In early morning of Jan. 20 — the date of the presidential inauguration — the moon will skim through the outer parts of earth's shadow, notes Teske.

"Because our large, natural satellite will not penetrate into the darkest part of the shadow this time, the sunlight that it normally reflects will be only partly cut off by the earth coming between sun and moon, so that its brightness will be little diminished."

"Mid-eclipse will occur at 2:50 a.m. Eastern time, when the northern part of the full moon advances furthest into part of the shadow. That portion of the moon will then easily look darker than its other areas."

Although the January eclipse may be a disappointment for some sky watchers, Teske says that another will be visible from North America this summer.

"On the night of July 16, the moon will partly enter the blackest part of earth's shadow, giving us a better show than the January event."

But sky watchers also can find in the evening skies three stars that are inexplicable, speeding away from their birthplace in the constellation of Orion, Teske points out.

"Orion is recognized by his three belt stars and three sword stars that seem to hang from the belt. On the western edge of this constellation, the runaways were born. They are now found great distances away on the face of the night sky."

"The fastest-moving of the trio, designated AE Aurigae, is located within the pentagon of Auriga, the Charioteer," Teske notes. "The constellation is directly north of Orion and is marked by brilliant Capella, which is nearly directly overhead at mid-evening."

"The second runaway, Mu Columbae, is situated in Columba, the constellation of the Dove, lying close to the horizon, directly south of Orion."

"The third one is 53 Arietis. It was the first of the three to be formed and the first to be flung from Orion. The star lies far to the northwest of Orion, in the constellation Aries, the Ram."

# Mail in payments, gas company asks

Citing Michigan's depressed economy, Consumers Power Co. has closed 26 customer contact offices and discontinued its bill payment service at local banks.

"We just cannot afford to keep these offices open," said Stephen H. Howell, the utility's executive vice president. "It's unfortunate, but true."

Low rates, reduced sales and higher interest charges have seriously affected the company's income and earnings, Howell said.

The Jackson-based utility serves 27,000 square miles. It sells natural gas in Oakland County and communities in Wayne County and both gas and electricity elsewhere.

THE BIRMINGHAM customer office at 189 Merrill will be the only office to close in Oakland. Offices in Pontiac and Royal Oak will be kept open.

There are no customer offices in Wayne County.

"The offices we are closing have declined in use for several years and a relatively small percentage of our customers will be affected," Howell said.

As of Dec. 31, Consumers Power also discontinued bill-paying arrangements with more than 80 percent of small business establishments which offer the service to its customers.

Most payment locations are at banks, savings and loan offices, drugstores and other small business establishments, Consumers officials said.

THE UTILITY will keep the bill-payment service at locations where customer use is highest, said Tom Rugh of Consumers Power in Pontiac.

"We've arranged it so that no customer is more than five miles from a payment station," Rugh said.

"We pay 10 cents per bill collected at bill payment locations," said he said. "We've spent \$800,000 per year on this operation alone. We hope to save a portion of that cost."

The company suggested customers mail in their payments whenever possible.

"Faced with lower earnings but blessed with technology... the closings of these offices make good economic sense," officials said.

Utility officials added that toll-free phone numbers, computerized billing information and automatic bank payment plans for utility bills are available for the utility's customers. Bill payment locations can be obtained by calling the customer service number shown on your energy bill.

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