

Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in June heavens

By Raymond E. Bullock
special writer

The author is coordinator of the planetarium and observatory at Cranbrook Institute of Science.

June is the month of the first day of summer and the longest days of the year. Unfortunately, because of daylight savings time, skywatchers must wait until after 10 p.m. to see dark skies.

Jupiter and Saturn are the most prominent planets this month, high in the south-southwest, although Mercury, Venus and Mars can also be sighted if you know where to look.

On June 1, Mercury is in the west-northwest sky, about seven degrees to the upper left of Venus 45 minutes after sunset. Venus will be close to the horizon. Binoculars will make finding both planets easier.

On June 3, the one-day-old waxing crescent moon is south (left) of Mercury and Venus. Watch how rapidly the two planets draw closer to each other from one night to the next.

On June 9, Mercury will be only 1.7 degrees south (left) of Venus, very low in the west-northwest following sunset. On this day the moon is one quarter of its way around the earth in its orbit, so it's called the first quarter moon.

On the following night, June 10, the moon is close to Jupiter and Saturn. Both planets are west (right) of the moon, and Saturn appears to be caught

between the moon and brilliant Jupiter.

WATCH JUPITER DRAW closer to Saturn as the date for the third (and final) conjunction between the two approaches in July. Notice how much slower these planets move compared to the motion of Mercury and Venus earlier this month.

The June 17 full moon rises at 9:16 p.m. The full moon always appears in the opposite part of the sky as the sun. Since the sun is at its highest altitude in June, the full moon will be at its lowest altitude. It will be in the constellation of Sagittarius where the sun will be six months from now. The moon's altitude at midnight will be close to the sun's lowest noon altitude at the beginning of winter.

Mars, the red planet, will be at six degrees north (left) of the red star Aldebaran, in Taurus on the morning of June 19. This may be difficult to see since Mars rises in the east-northeast in the glow of sunrise.

Summer officially arrives when the sun reaches its highest altitude with respect to the celestial equator, an imaginary line that corresponds to the earth's equator extended out into space. On June 21 at 7:45 a.m. EDT, the sun reaches this position. (Actually, it's the earth that is moving around the sun. Our tilt causes the sun to appear high in the sky in summer and low in winter.)

Sunrise on June 21 will be at 5:54

a.m. and sunset at 9:13 p.m. There will be 15 hours and 19 minutes of sunshine — weather permitting.

The summer triangle is well up in the east after sunset all month. Look for three bright stars. Vega is highest and brightest. Deneb is lower and to the left. Altair is lowest and to the right.

THERE ARE ACTUALLY three individual constellations. Vega is in Lyra the Lyre, Deneb is the tail of Cygnus the Swan, and Altair marks Aquila the Eagle. Cygnus has also been called the "Northern Cross," and we see it on its side in early summer.

The Beak of the Swan, the star Al-

bireo, located near the center of the Summer Triangle, is a beautiful double star of two different colors. It is a spectacular sight through a telescope.

Cranbrook Institute of Science's observatory will offer telescopic views of Jupiter, Saturn and other objects this month. The observatory is open every Saturday night from 8:30-10:30 p.m.

Because of daylight time, the sun will still be up at 9 p.m., so an attempt will be made to project the sun through the telescope for the first half hour. After the sky darkens it should be possible to spot brilliant Jupiter and other objects.

For observatory information, call Cranbrook at 645-3209.

Artist assembles bits and pieces

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Assemblages dominate Michael Smith's show at the Print Gallery, 2923 North Western, Southfield, through June. Smith, a graphics designer, has several acrylics and some small watercolors mixed in, but the assemblages are obviously most important to him.

He likes to combine familiar objects, things we see around us every day, with paint and a well-developed sense of design to come up with an unfamiliar, but pleasing patterned whole.

"I like it when every time you look at it you see something you haven't seen before," said Smith. He takes a kind of paternal attitude toward a phrase he uses to describe his assemblages, "organized chaos."

That lavender shaded to purple fuzzy cylinder, it turns out, is one of his paint rollers incorporated into an assemblage along with a bit of sponge, part of a brush — all things he had used in his art.

Smith likes to work on corrugated paper and corrugated cardboard from boxes. The textural quality he achieves

when he paints on both the smooth and rippled surfaces pleases him. In one assemblage, the soft cottony surface in the center is an opened packing envelope.

"I love texture, color, patterns and shapes," said Smith who manages to get considerable mileage from the torn pieces and skeletal remains of our lives.

Like many in the graphic design field, Smith is well acquainted with the technology of art and adept in use of materials. He develops interesting color effects with opaque and transparent

watercolors as well as acrylics. He may decide to paint on peg board and use the holes as part of the design pattern or he may simply ignore their existence.

His assemblages sometimes, but not always, have a theme. There's a couple that fall into a "Handyman" series and three others belong to a cloud series, "Pink Clouds," "Fast Clouds" and "Storm Clouds."

Smith said, "I let the shapes and pieces dictate."

Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday and Thursday until 9 p.m.

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