

June a good month for planet-viewing



RAYMOND E. BULLOCK

June is the month of good news and bad news. The good news: Summer officially arrives. The bad news: It's all down hill from here as the amount of sunlight we receive begins to decrease.

This will be an excellent month for spotting planets; all five of the naked-eye planets will be visible. Mercury will be especially well-placed for locating. Venus reaches maximum elongation from the sun, and Jupiter continues its extremely close grouping with the star Eta Virginis.

You can't miss brilliant Jupiter; it will be high in the south southwest 45 minutes after sunset. (Sunset on the 1st will be at 8:07 p.m. EDT.) Jupiter, at least that will be the case until June 7, after which Jupiter's motion will have carried it far enough away from the star to end the illusion. In actual fact, Eta (the seventh brightest star in Virgo, hence the distinction of the seventh letter of

the Greek alphabet) will be much brighter than Jupiter's moons and easy to identify.

Notice the star five degrees to the left of the moon on the evening of the 1st. This is Alpha Librae; it is the brightest star in the constellation of Libra, hence it is designated by the first letter in the Greek alphabet. It also has a "proper" name, one that is much more interesting to say: Zuben el Genubi (ZOO ben el gen YOU boo).

Zuben el Genubi means the "southern claw." This star was once considered to be a part of the neighboring constellation to the east, Scorpius the scorpion. Above and to the left of Zuben el Genubi is Beta Librae, also named Zosma. Eachamall (ZOO ben es aha Ma lee), the "northern claw."

On the evening of the 3rd, the moon will be located three degrees (six full moon diameters) above Antares (an TAAE), the "heart" of Scorpius. Also known as Alpha Scorpii, this is the 15th brightest star in the sky. (Notice that the "alpha" star in Scorpius is considerably brighter than the "alpha" star in Libra.) Antares, which means "rival of Mars," has about the same color and brightness as the red planet. The moon will be approaching Antares once again at the end of the month.

Full moon will be at 9:02 a.m. on June 4. The moon will be located behind the earth, as seen from the sun, and will be fully

lighted. In fact, the moon will be EXACTLY behind the earth, and it will pass through our planet's shadow, resulting in a total eclipse of the moon. That's the good news; now for the bad. Since the moon is OPPOSITE the sun, where do you think it will be located at 9:02 a.m., which is about three hours AFTER sunrise? That's right: the moon will be below the horizon. Obviously the eclipse will not be visible from Michigan. If you want to see it, you'll have to try Hawaii.

Incidentally, since the full moon is always opposite the sun, and since the sun is at its HIGHEST point in the sky in June, the full moon that occurs in June has the LOWEST trajectory of any full moon during the year. The June full moon was called the "Rose Moon," "Flower Moon" and "Strawberry Moon" by various Native American Indians.

The week beginning with June 7 will be the best for spotting Mercury in the evening sky. Use binoculars and look eight degrees (16 full moons) above the west northwest horizon, about 45 minutes after sunset. Once located, it should be possible to see it with the naked-eye. (If the ancient skywatchers could see it, so can you!) The moon will pass Mercury in two weeks and help in locating the planet, but by then Mercury will have faded considerably in brightness.

Look for Mars in the west southwest on the evening of the 8th. It will be located in Leo, about eight degrees to the right of Regulus (REG u lus), the "heart" of the lion. Mars will be moving about one-half of a degree (with respect to the stars) from night to night. The two objects will be less than one degree apart in two weeks.

Venus will be at its maximum elongation (greatest angular distance) from the sun on June 10. It will be 46 degrees east of the sun, and will be 15 degrees above the horizon 45 minutes before sunrise. If you look at Venus with a telescope, you may be surprised to discover it will look like a last-quarter moon. (This is best done after the sky has begun to brighten with morning twilight to reduce the contrast between the bright planet and dark sky.)

Venus, which gets its light from the sun like all planets, goes through phases. The planet will remain visible for the next several months, during which time telescope views will show it slowly changing into a crescent.

Raymond Bullock is former coordinator of the observatory at Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills. He is now with a Troy firm which specializes in laser displays and effects. You can reach him at 853-2047, mailbox 1852, from a touch-tone phone or by fax at 644-1314.

Senior pros at fund-raiser

By RALPH E. ECHTNAW
STAFF WRITER

With the help of Plymouth resident Tom Bohlander, Schoolcraft College has landed some distinguished company indeed for its 10th annual golf outing fund-raiser.

Bohlander, a Schoolcraft Foundation board member and the owner of Sunshine Honda of Plymouth and Sunshine Acura of Farmington Hills, used his auto-related connections to enlist the aid of six Senior Professional Golf Association members: Tommy Aaron, Jim Albis, Terry Dill, Dick Hendrickson, Dave Hill, Orville Moody and Charles Coady — for the college's links extravaganza.

The pros, each sponsored by an automobile manufacturer, are required by contract to play in a certain number of events such as Schoolcraft's fund-raiser. Bohlander convinced auto company officials to include Schoolcraft on that list.

"This is going to be absolutely the most wonderful golf outing that ever existed," said Schoolcraft spokeswoman Sandra "Sam" Florek, noting that the 14 afternoon times (\$200 each) are almost

entirely spoken for a month before the event is scheduled to occur — June 21 at the Golden Fox Course at Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth. Morning tee times are \$160 and still available.

Florek said Schoolcraft raised \$28,000 at its 1992 golf fund-raiser and will net at least \$36,000 if all 288 slots are filled this year. The money will be used to create new scholarships.

To sign up, call 482-4417. The format is as follows: Participants play a four-person scramble for 18 holes with a golf cart. The professional golfers split into two groups of three. One group plays in the morning, the other in the afternoon. Each pro plays one hole over and over.

At the outdoor luncheon, morning and afternoon golfers may take part in a golf clinic, also put on by the pros.

Dinner with the pros follows the golf-playing, and Bohlander hopes to snare additional famous golfers for that, because most of the senior four players will be in town for the Ford Senior Players Championship at TPC-Deerborn.

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