# the OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK 1976



**sixty-eighth year of publication**

**the ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of CANADA**

**editor: JOHN R. PERCY**

# **THE ORIGINS OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA**

In the mid-nineteenth century, in the bustling Lake Ontario port city of Toronto, there were no professional astronomers. However, many inhabitants of the city were keenly interested in sciences and current developments in them. King's College, which grew into the University of Toronto, had been started in 1842. In 1849 it had 36 undergraduates attending, and had graduated a total of 55 students in the three faculties of arts, law and medicine. The Toronto Magnetic Observatory had been established in 1840. Its early directors and observers were officers and soldiers in garrison. Some of them, such as Captain J. F. Lefroy, contributed much to the cultural life of the city. Out of this body of interest came the Canadian Institute established in 1849 "to promote those pursuits which are calculated to refine and exalt a people".

Besides holding weekly meetings, the Canadian Institute accumulated an outstanding library. There many hours were spent in study by Andrew Elvins who had come to Canada from Cornwall in 1844. In 1860 he moved to Toronto, with a population then of 44,000, and became chief cutter in a well known clothing store on King Street. While the Canadian Institute held discussion meetings of all sciences, Elvins wished to concentrate on astronomy. For this purpose he gathered together a few like-minded friends.

On December 1, 1868 The Toronto Astronomical Club met for the first time, at the Elvins' home, "having for its object the aiding of each other in the pursuit of astronomical knowledge". The thousands of meteor sightings of the Leonid showers made in Toronto in November 1867 and 1868 had doubtless encouraged the project. In May, 1869 the word "Club" was changed to "Society". Written records were kept for the first year, until the secretary moved away. After that, the group met only sporadically, but by the distribution of materials Elvins kept interest alive.

As the century wore on, Elvins, who lived till 1918, acquired more kindred spirits, some of them influential and prominent. As a result, on March 10,1890 the organization was incorporated as The Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of Toronto. In May, 1900 chiefly through the efforts of one of the important early members George E. Lumsden, the name was changed to The Toronto Astronomical Society. On March 3, 1903 through legal application the name took on its current form, The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. For many years the Society had its offices and library in the Canadian Institute buildings, and held meetings there.

Early in the 1890's, Dr. Clarence A. Chant of the University of Toronto became deeply interested in the Society. The impetus which he gave to it until his death in 1956 still lingers. During its first fifteen years the Society published annually volumes containing its Transactions and Annual Report. In 1907 Dr. Chant started The Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and this Handbook, called then "The Canadian Astronomical Handbook". It is a remarkable fact that at the time of his death Dr. Chant had been the Editor of both the Journal and the Handbook for exactly 50 years. During this period he received generous assistance from many of the Society's members. At times the Journal was published monthly, but currently it is bi-monthly.

The change of name in 1903 led immediately to the concept that the Society should not be limited to Toronto, but should become national in scope. The second Centre to be established was that of Ottawa in 1906, where the Dominion Observatory was being established. Now the Society has 18 Centres from sea to sea across Canada, as listed elsewhere in this Handbook. The growth in membership to nearly 3000 also shows its flourishing state.

**HELEN SAWYER HOGG** 

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**252 College Street, Toronto M5T 1R7, Canada**

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# **THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA Incorporated 1890 – Royal Charter 1903 – Federally Incorporated 1968**

The National Office of the Society is located at 252 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R7; the business office, reading room and astronomical library are housed here.

Membership is open to anyone interested in astronomy and applicants may affiliate with one of the eighteen Centres across Canada established in St. John's, Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Hamilton, Niagara Falls, London, Windsor, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria and Toronto, or join the National Society direct.

Publications of the Society are free to members, and include the **JOURNAL** (6 issues per year) and the **Observer's H andbook** (published annually in November). Annual fees of \$12.50 (\$7.50 for persons under 18 years) are payable October 1 and include the publications for the following calendar year.

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## THE OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK 1976

**THE observer'<sup>s</sup> handbook for** 1976 is the sixty-eighth edition. I wish to thank all those who assisted in its preparation: those whose names appear in the various sections, those mentioned below, and especially my editorial assistant, John F. A. Perkins.

There are several major changes in this year's **HANDBOOK**. You will notice that the **handbo ok** no longer carries advertisements. The decision to discontinue advertisements was made by the Council of the Society, in order for the **HANDBOOK** to qualify (under federal law) as a non-commercial publication. We thank our advertisers for their support over the years.

The pages which were previously occupied by advertisements have been used to ease the crowding of material in the various sections, and to accommodate new material. There is now a set of six new star maps, drawn by John Perkins, and two extra pages of material on variable stars, provided by Janet Mattei of the A.A.V.S.O. Dr. John F. Heard has expanded his descriptions of "The Sky Month By Month", and Dr. Helen S. Hogg has provided a capsule history of the Society, on the inside front cover.

My thanks go to Dr. Ian Halliday for revising the page of "Miscellaneous Astronomical Data", to Dr. Cecil Costain for providing information on standard time zones, to Drs. Donald MacRae, C. T. Bolton and R. F. Garrison for revising the section on "The Brightest Stars", and to many readers of the **HANDBOOK** for spotting errors and inaccuracies and for making helpful suggestions. Special thanks also go to Maude Towne and Isabel Williamson, who have calculated the tables of moonrise and moonset for many years and who are now retiring from this onerous but important task. The David Dunlap Observatory and Erindale College, University of Toronto, have once again provided financial, technical and moral support for the **HANDBOOK.**

Finally, my deep indebtedness to H.M. Nautical Almanac Office (particularly Leslie V. Morrison, Gordon E. Taylor and Superintendent Dr. G. A Wilkins) and to the *American Ephemeris* is gratefully acknowledged.

**John** R. **Percy**



#### ANNIVERSARIES AND FESTIVALS, 1976

# **SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

# SUN, MOON AND PLANETS The Moon generally

- $\odot$  The Sun
- **®** New Moon
- Full Moon
- Venus
- **D** First Quarter
- Last Quarter
- Earth

Mercury

 $\sigma$ <sup>7</sup> Mars

### SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC



#### THE GREEK ALPHABET



#### CO-ORDINATE SYSTEMS AND TERMINOLOGY

Astronomical positions are usually measured in a system based on the *celestial poles* and *celestial equator*, the intersections of the earth's rotation axis and equatorial plane, respectively, and the infinite sphere of the sky. *Right ascension* (R.A. or  $\alpha$ ) is measured in hours (h), minutes (m) and seconds (s) of time, eastward along the celestial equator from the *vernal equinox. Declination* (Dec. or 8) is measured in degrees ( $\degree$ ), minutes ( $\degree$ ) and seconds ( $\degree$ ) of arc, northward (N or +) or southward  $(S \text{ or } -)$  from the celestial equator toward the N or S celestial pole. One hour of time equals 15 degrees.

Positions can also be measured in a system based on the *ecliptic*, the intersection of the earth's orbit plane and the infinite sphere of the sky. The sun appears to move eastward along the ecliptic during the year. *Longitude* is measured eastward along the ecliptic from the vernal equinox; *latitude* is measured at right angles to the ecliptic, northward or southward toward the N or S ecliptic pole. The *vernal equinox* is one of the two intersections of the ecliptic and the celestial equator; it is the one at which the sun crosses the celestial equator moving from south to north.

Objects are *in conjunction* if they have the same longitude or R.A., and are *in opposition* if they have longitudes or R.A.'s which differ by 180°. If the second object is not specified, it is assumed to be the sun. For instance, if a planet is "in conjunction", it has the same longitude as the sun. At *superior conjunction,* the planet is more distant than the sun; at *inferior conjunction*, it is nearer.

If an object crosses the ecliptic moving northward, it is at the *ascending node* of its orbit; if it crosses the ecliptic moving southward, it is at the *descending node.*

*Elongation* is the difference in longitude between an object and a second object (usually the sun). At conjunction, the elongation of a planet is thus zero.

- 21 Jupiter
- Saturn
- **A** Uranus
- Neptune
- P Pluto

# **THE CONSTELLATIONS**

#### LATIN NAMES WITH PRONUNCIATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Andromeda.





ā fāte; ā chāotic; ă tăp; *ă* fin*ă*l; à àsk; *a* idea; â câre; ä älms; au aught; ē bē; e crēate; ě ěnd; *ě* angěl; é makẽr; ī tīme; ǐ bǐt; *ǐ* an*i*mal; ō nōte; ō anatōmy; ǒ hǒt; *ǒ ǒ*ccur; ô ôrb; ōō mōōn; oo book; ou ou

# **MISCELLANEOUS ASTRONOMICAL DATA**

```
UNITS OF LENGTH<br>1 Angstrom unit = 10^{-8} cm
                                                                       1 micrometre, \mu = 10^{-4} cm = 10<sup>4</sup>A.
     1 inch = exactly 2.54 centimetres 1 cm = 10 \text{ mm} = 0.39370... in<br>1 vard = exactly 0.9144 metre 1 m = 10^2 \text{ cm} = 1.0936... yd
     1 yard = exactly 0.9144 metre 1 m = 10^2 cm = 1.0936 ... yd<br>
1 mile = exactly 1.609344 kilometres 1 km = 10^3 cm = 0.62137 ... mi
     1 \text{ mile} = exactly 1.609344 \text{ kilometers}1 astronomical unit = 1.4960 x 1013 cm = 1.496 x 108 km = 9.2956 x 107 mi
     1 light-year = 9.461 \times 10<sup>17</sup> cm = 5.88 \times 10<sup>12</sup> mi = 0.3068 parsecs
     1 parsec = 3.086 \times 10<sup>18</sup> cm = 1.917 \times 10<sup>13</sup> mi = 3.262 l.y.
     1 megaparsec = 10^6 parsecs
UNITS OF TIME
    Sidereal day
     Mean solar day
     Synodic month
     Tropical year (ordinary) = 365d\,05h\,48m\,46s = 36542422 = 2743216Sidereal year
    Eclipse year
THE EARTH
    Equatorial radius, a = 6378.164 \text{ km} = 3963.21 \text{ mi}: flattening, c = (a - b)/a = 1/298.25Polar radius, b = 6356.779 \text{ km} = 3949.92 \text{ mi}<br>1° of latitude = 111.133 - 0.559 cos 2
                                  = 111.133 - 0.559 \cos 2\phi \text{ km} = 69.055 - 0.347 \cos 2\phi \text{ mi} (at lat. \phi)
     1^{\circ} of longitude = 111.413 \cos \phi - 0.094 \cos 3\phi \text{ km} = 69.229 \cos \phi - 0.0584 \cos 3\phi \text{ mi}Mass of earth = 5.976 \times 10^{24} \text{ km} = 13.17 \times 10^{24} \text{ lb}Velocity of escape from \oplus = 11.2 km/sec = 6.94 mi/sec
EARTH'S ORBITAL MOTION
     Solar parallax = 8''.794 (adopted)
     Constant of aberration = 20".496 (adopted)
     Annual general precession = 50".26; obliquity of ecliptic = 23^{\circ} 26' 35'' (1970)
     Orbital velocity = 29.8 km/sec = 18.5 mi/sec
     Parabolic velocity at \oplus = 42.3 km/sec = 26.2 mi/sec
SOLAR MOTION
     Solar apex, R.A. 18h 04m, Dec. + 30°; solar velocity = 19.75 km/sec = 12.27 mi/sec
THE GALACTIC SYSTEM
     North pole of galactic plane R.A. 12h 49m, Dec. + 27.°4 (1950)
     Centre of galaxy R.A. 17h 42.4m, Dec. — 28° 55' (1950) (zero pt. for new gal. coord.)
     Distance to centre \sim 10,000 parsecs; diameter \sim 30,000 parsecs
     Rotational velocity (at sun) ~ 250 km/sec
     Rotational period (at sun) \sim 2.46 \times 10<sup>8</sup> years
     Mass \sim 1.4 \times 10^{11} solar masses
EXTERNAL GALAXIES
     Red Shift \sim +75 km/sec/megaparsec \sim 14 miles/sec/million l.y.
RADIATION CONSTANTS
     Velocity of light, c = 2.997925 \times 10^{10} cm/sec = 186,282.1 mi/sec
     Frequency, v = c/\lambda; v in Hertz (cycles per sec), c in cm/sec, \lambda in cm
     Solar constant = 1.950 gram calories/square cm/minute = 1.36 \times 10^6 cgs units
     Light ratio for one magnitude = 2.512...; log ratio = exactly 0.4
     Stefan's constant = 5.66956 \times 10-5 cgs units
M ISCELLANEOUS
     Constant of gravitation, G = 6.6727 \times 10^{-8} cgs units
     Mass of the electron, m = 9.1096 \times 10^{-28} gm; mass of the proton = 1.6727 \times 10<sup>-24</sup> gm
     Planck's constant, h = 6.6262 \times 10^{-27} erg sec
     Absolute temperature = T^{\circ} K = T^{\circ} C + 273^{\circ} = 5/9 (T^{\circ} F + 459°)<br>1 radian = 57^{\circ},2958 \pi = 3.141,592,653,6
     1 radian = 57^{\circ}, 2958<br>= 3437', 75
                                         No. of square degrees in the sky = 41,253= 206,265'' 1 gram = 0.03527 oz
                                = 23h 56m 04.09s of mean solar time
                              = 24h 03m 56.56s of mean sidereal time
                                = 29d 12h 44m 03s = 2945306 Sidereal month = 27d 07h<br>= 365d 05h 48m 46s = 36542422 = 2743216= 365d\,06h\,09m\,10s = 365\,92564= 346d 14h 52m 52s = 34646200
```
# **SUN—EPHEMERIS AND CORRECTION TO SUN-DIAL**



# **PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM** MEAN ORBITAL ELEMENTS



These elements, for epoch 1960 Jan. 1.5 E.T., are taken from the *Explanatory Supplement to the American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac.*



## PHYSICAL ELEMENTS

†Depending on latitude. For the physical observations of the sun, p. 58, the sidereal period of rotation is 25.38 m.s.d.





**Apparent magnitude and mean distance from planet are at mean opposition distance. The inclination of the orbit is referred to the planet's equator; a value greater than 90° indicates retrograde motion.**

**Apparent magnitudes and most of the diameters are from data presented at the IAU Colloquium on Planetary Satellites, Cornell University, August 1974, as printed in** *Astronomy* **magazine. I thank Mr. R. T. Dickinson for providing this data. The diameters of the smaller satellites are very uncertain, because they depend on assumptions about the albedo of the satellite.**

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#### TIME

Any recurring event may be used to measure time. The various times commonly used are defined by the daily passages of the sun or stars caused by the rotation of the earth on its axis. The more uniform revolution of the earth about the sun, causing the return of the seasons, defines ephemeris time. The atomic second has been defined; atomic time has been maintained in various labs, and an internationally acceptable atomic time scale is under discussion.

A sundial indicates *apparent solar time*, but this is far from uniform because of the earth's elliptical orbit and the inclination of the ecliptic. If the real sun is replaced by a fictitious mean sun moving uniformly in the equator, we have *mean* (solar) *time. Apparent time*  $-$  *mean time*  $=$  *equation of time. This is the same as correction to sundial* on page 7, with reversed sign.

If instead of the sun we use stars, we have *sidereal time.* The sidereal time is zero when the vernal equinox or first point of Aries is on the meridian. As the earth makes one more rotation with respect to the stars than it does with respect to the sun during a year, sidereal time gains on mean time  $3<sup>m</sup> 56<sup>s</sup>$  per day or 2 hours per month. Right Ascension (R.A.) is measured east from the vernal equinox, so that the R.A. of a body on the meridian is equal to the sidereal time.

Sidereal time is equal to mean solar time plus 12 hours plus the R.A. of the fictitious mean sun, so that by observation of one kind of time we can calculate the other. Local Sidereal time may be found approximately from Standard or zone time (0 h at midnight) by applying the corrections for longitude (p. 14) and sundial (p. 7) to obtain apparent solar time, then adding 12 h and R.A. sun (p. 7). (Note that it is necessary to obtain R.A. of the sun and correction to sundial at the standard time involved.)

Local mean time varies continuously with longitude. The local mean time of Greenwich, now known as *Universal Time* (UT) is used as a common basis for timekeeping. Navigation and surveying tables are generally prepared in terms of UT. When great precision is required, UT1 and UT2 are used differing from UT by polar variation and by the combined effects of polar variation and annual fluctuation respectively.

To avoid the inconveniences to travellers of a changing local time, *standard time* is used. The earth is divided into 24 zones, each ideally 15 degrees wide, the zero zone being centered on the Greenwich meridian. All clocks within the same zone will read the same time.

In Canada and the United States there are 9 standard time zones as follows: Newfoundland (N),  $3<sup>h</sup> 30<sup>m</sup>$  slower than Greenwich; 60th meridian or Atlantic (A), 4 hours; 75th meridian or Eastern (E), 5 hours; 90th meridian or Central (C), 6 hours; 105th meridian or Mountain (M), 7 hours; 120th meridian or Pacific (P), 8 hours; 135th meridian or Yukon (Y), 9 hours; 150th meridian or Alaska-Hawaii, 10 hours; and 165th meridian or Bering, 11 hours slower than Greenwich.

The mean solar second, defined as 1/86400 of the mean solar day, has been abandoned as the unit of time because random changes in the earth's rotation make it variable. The unit of time has been redefined twice within the past two decades. In 1956 it was defined in terms of Ephemeris Time (ET) as 1/31,556,925.9747 of the tropical year 1900 January 0 at 12 hrs. ET. In 1967 it was redefined as 9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the cesium 133 atom. Ephemeris Time is required in

celestial mechanics, while the cesium resonator makes the unit readily available. The difference,  $\Delta T$ , between UT and ET is measured as a small error in the observed longitude of the moon, in the sense  $\Delta T = ET - UT$ . The moon's position is tabulated in ET, but observed in UT.  $\Delta T$  was zero near the beginning of the century, but in 1976 will be about 47 seconds.

#### RADIO TIME SIGNALS

National time services distribute co-ordinated time called UTC, which on January 1, 1972, was adjusted so that the time interval is the atomic second. The resulting atomic time gains on mean solar time at a rate of about a second a year. An approximation to UT1 is maintained by stepping the atomic time scale in units of 1 second on June 30 or December 31 when required so that the divergence from mean solar time (DUT1 = UT1 - UTC) does not exceed 0.6 second. The first such "leap second" occurred on June 30, 1972. These changes are coordinated through the Bureau International de l'Heure (BIH), so that most time services are synchronized to the tenth of a millisecond.

DUT1 is identified each minute on CHU and WWV by a special group of split or double pulses. The number of such marker pulses in a group gives the value of DUT1 in tenths of a second. If the group starts with the first (not zero) second of each minute, DUT1 is positive and mean solar time is ahead of the transmitted time; if with the 9th second DUT1 is negative, and mean solar time is behind.

Radio time signals readily available in Canada include:<br>CHU Ottawa, Canada 3330, 7335, 14670 kHz 3330, 7335, 14670 kHz WWV Fort Collins, Colorado 2.5, 5, 10, 20, 25 MHz WWVH Maui, Hawaii

#### JULIAN DAY CALENDAR, 1976



The Julian day commences at noon, so that J.D. 2442779 = Jan. 1.5 U.T. 1976 = 12 hours U.T., Jan. 1, 1976.

The Julian date is commonly used by astronomers to refer to the time of astronomical events, because it avoids some of the annoying complexities of the civil calendar. The Julian day corresponding to a given date is the number of days which have elapsed since Jan. 1, 4713 B.C.

This system was introduced in 1582 by Josephus Justus Scaliger under the name of the Julian period. The Julian period lasts 7980 years, and is the least common multiple of three cycles: the solar cycle of 28 Julian years, the lunar (or Metonic) cycle of 19 Julian years, and the Roman indiction cycle of 15 years. On Jan. 1, 4713 B.C., all three cycles began together. For more information, see "The Julian Period", by C. H. Cleminshaw in the *Griffith Observer,* April 1975

MAP OF STANDARD TIME ZONES



PRODUCED BY THE SURVEYS AND MAPPING BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES, OTTAWA, CANADA, 1973.

*Note:* Since the preparation of the above map, the standard time zones have been changed so that all parts of the Yukon Territory now observe Pacific Standard Time. The Yukon Standard Time Zone still includes a small part of Alaska, as shown on the above map.

## VISITING HOURS AT SOME CANADIAN OBSERVATORIES **Compiled by M arie Litchinsky**

*Burke-Gaffney Observatory,* Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3C3. *October-April:* Saturday evenings 7 :00 p.m.

*May-September:* Saturday evenings 9 :00 p.m.

*David Dunlap Observatory,* Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 4Y6.

Wednesday mornings throughout the year, 10:00 a.m.

Saturday evenings, April through October (by reservation, tel. 884-2112).

*Dominion Astrophysical Observatory*, Victoria, B.C. V8X 3X3.

*May-August:* Daily, 9:15 a.m.-4:15 p.m.

*Monday to Friday, 9:15 a.m.*-4:15 p.m.

Public observing, Saturday evenings, April-October inclusive.

*Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory,* Penticton, B.C V2A 6K3

Sunday, July and August only (2:00-5:00 p.m.).

#### PLANETARIUMS

- *The Calgary Centennial Planetarium,* Mewata Park, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5 *Winter:* Wed.-Fri., 7:15 and 8:45 p.m. Sat.-Sun., 1:45 (children), 3:00, 7:15 and 8:45 p.m. (Closed Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Good Friday.)
- *Summer:* Daily except Tues., 1:45 (children), 3:00,4:15,7:15 and 8 :45 p.m.
- *Dow Planetarium,* 1000 St. Jacques St. W., Montreal, P.Q.
- *In English:* Tues.-Fri., 12:15 p.m.; Sat. 1:00 and 3:30 p.m.; Sun. 2:15 p.m. Evenings (except Mon.) 8:15 p.m.
- *In French:* Tues.-Sat., 2:15 p.m., also Sat. 4:30 p.m., Sun. 1:00, 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. Evenings (except Mon.) 9:30 p.m.
- *H. R. MacMillan Planetarium,* 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9.<br>*Sept.-June:* Tues.-Wed. 3:00 and 7:30 p.m.; Thurs. 7:30 p.m.; Fri. 7:
	- *Sept.-June:* Tues.-Wed. 3:00 and 7:30 p.m.; Thurs. 7:30 p.m.; Fri. 7:30 and 9:00 p.m.; Weekends and Holidays, 1:00, 2:30, 4:00, 7:30 and 9:00 p.m.
	- *July-August:* Mornings (Tues. to Sat.) 11:30 a.m. Afternoons (Tues. to Sun.) 1:00,2 :30,4 :00 p.m.

Evenings (Mon. to Sun.) 7 :30 and 9 :00 p.m.

- *Manitoba Museum of Man & Nature Planetarium*, 190 Rupert Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3B0N2.
	- *Sept.-June:* Tues.-Fri. 3:15 and 8:00 p.m.; Sat. and holidays, 1:00,2:30,4:00, 7 :30 and 9 :00 p.m.; Sun. 1:00, 2:30 and 4:00 p.m. Closed Mondays except holidays.
	- *July-August:* Mon. 2:00 and 3:30 p.m. (except holidays); Tues.-Fri. 11:00 a.m., 2:00, 3:30, 7:30 and 9:00 p.m.; Sat., Sun. and holidays 1:00,2:30, 4 :00,7:30 and 9:00 p.m.

*McLaughlin Planetarium,* 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2C6.

Tues.-Sun. 1:30, 3:00 and 7:30 p.m. Holidays 1:30 and 3:00 p.m.

Theatre closed on Mondays, except on holidays.

- *McMaster University,* School of Adult Education, GH-122, Hamilton, Ont. Group reservations only.
- *Queen Elizabeth Planetarium,* Edmonton, Alberta. *Winter:* Tues.-Fri. 8:00 p.m., Sat. 3:00 p.m., Sun. and holidays 3:00and 8:00 p.m. *Summer:* Mon.-Sat. 3:00 and 8:00 p.m., Sun. and holidays 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.
- *Seneca College Planetarium,* 1750 Finch Ave. East, Willowdale, Ont. M2N 5T7. Group reservations only.
- *The University of Manitoba Planetarium*, 394 University College, 500 Dysart Rd., Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2M8.

Telephone 474-9785 for times of public shows and for group reservations.

#### TIMES OF RISING AND SETTING OF THE SUN AND MOON

The times of sunrise and sunset for places in latitudes ranging from 30° to 54° are given on pages  $15$  to 20, and of twilight on page 21. The times of moonrise and moonset for the 5 h meridian are given on pages 22 to 27. The times are given in Local Mean Time, and in the table below are given corrections to change from Local Mean Time to Standard Time for the cities and towns named.

The tabulated values are computed for the sea horizon for the rising and setting of the upper limb of the sun and moon, and are corrected for refraction. Because variations from the sea horizon usually exist on land, the tabulated times can rarely be observed.

#### *The Standard Times for Any Station*

To derive the Standard Time of rising and setting phenomena for the places named, from the list below find the approximate latitude of the place and the correction in minutes which follows the name. Then find in the monthly table the Local Mean Time of the phenomenon for the proper latitude on the desired day. Finally apply the correction to get the Standard Time. The correction is the number of minutes of time that the place is west (plus) or east (minus) of the standard meridian. The corrections for places not listed may be obtained by converting the longitude found from an atlas into time  $(360^{\circ} = 24 \text{ h})$ .



*Example*—Find the time of sunrise at Owen Sound, on February 12.

In the above list Owen Sound is under "45°", and the correction is  $+24$  min. On page 15 the time of sunrise on February 12 for latitude 45° is 7.06; add 24 min. and we get 7.30 (Eastern Standard Time).















TWILIGHT—BEGINNING OF MORNING AND ENDING OF EVENING

The above table gives the local mean time of the beginning of morning twilight, and of the ending<br>of evening twilight, for various latitudes. To obtain the corresponding standard time, the method used<br>is the same as for c















## **THE PLANETS FOR 1976**

#### MERCURY

Mercury is the smallest planet and the closest to the sun. Like our moon, it has very little atmosphere, and its surface is covered with impact craters. However, Mercury lacks the vast plains or *maria* which are so conspicuous on the moon. The orbit of Mercury is well within that of the earth, and the planet appears to move quickly (hence its name) from one side of the sun to the other, several times in the year. Its greatest elongation (angular distance from the sun) varies from 18° to 28°, and on such occasions it can be seen by the unaided eye for about two weeks. Despite its considerable brilliance it is always viewed in the twilight sky and one must look carefully to see it.

The following table lists the greatest elongations east (evening sky) and west (morning sky) during the year. Only those marked \* are particularly favourable.



#### VENUS

Since the orbit of Venus lies within that of the earth, its apparent motion is like Mercury's but is much slower and more stately. At inferior conjunction, it comes within 50 million km of the earth, and its nearness and its reflective cloud layer make it the brightest of the planets. In size and structure, it is much like the earth, but it has a thick layer of clouds and a dense, hot atmosphere of carbon dioxide. It is visible to the unaided eye in the daytime, if one knows where to look. In a small telescope, it displays a series of phases like those of the moon.

Venus is easily identified by its great brilliance, though it is not as conspicuous in 1976 as in other years. It was at greatest elongation west (morning sky) late in 1975, and in 1976 it will gradually close in on the sun until mid-May, when it becomes too close to the sun for observation. From late July onwards, it is visible in the evening sky, reaching greatest elongation east in early 1977. Venus is in conjunction with Mars on September 10.

#### MARS

Since the orbit of Mars is outside that of the earth, its planetary phenomena are quite different from those of Mercury and Venus. At intervals of about 780 days (the synodic period), Mars can be seen in opposition to the sun. Its distance from earth is then smallest and (if Mars is at perihelion) can be as small as 56 million km. Such close approaches occur at intervals of 15 to 17 years; the most recent was in 1971.

The atmosphere of Mars is thin and consists mainly of carbon dioxide; some surface features are distinctly visible in a good telescope. Mariner spacecraft have photographed most of the surface. Much of it is covered by shallow impact craters, but there are also volcanoes, canyons and wind-swept deserts.

Mars—always conspicuous because of its reddish colour—is visible in the evening until early October, when it becomes too close to the sun for observation. On January 1, Mars is in Taurus, and has a magnitude of  $-1.2$  and an apparent diameter of

30 arc sec. On April 7, at 20<sup>h</sup> E.S T., it occults  $\varepsilon$  Gem (see "Planetary Appulses"). On the evening of May 5, still in Gemini, it makes a fine grouping with Saturn and the crescent moon. On May 11, at 21<sup>h</sup> E.S.T., it is 1.3° N. of Saturn, the latter being the brighter. On July 5, at  $13<sup>h</sup>$  E.S.T., it is 0.7° N. of Regulus in Leo.

#### JUPITER

Jupiter, the giant of the sun's family, is a fine object for the telescope. Belts of clouds may be observed, interrupted by irregular spots which may be short-lived or persist for weeks. The "great red spot" has been visible for centuries. The flattening of the planet, due to its fast rotation, is conspicuous, and the phenomena of its satellites provide a continual interest. The four largest satellites are of great interest to professional astronomers, who are studying them as intensively as they studied the planets a few years ago.

In early 1976, Jupiter dominates the region of Pisces, in the evening sky. Conjunction occurs on April 27, after which Jupiter moves into the morning sky. In September and October, it is in Taurus, directly between the Hyades and the Pleiades. At opposition on November 18, it has a magnitude of  $-2.4$  and an apparent diameter of about 95 arc sec. By the end of the year, it is visible in the evening sky, sharing the spotlight with Venus.

#### SATURN

Saturn was the outermost planet known until modern times and, with its unique system of rings, is one of the finest of celestial objects in a good telescope. The plane of the rings makes an angle of 27° with the plane of the planet's orbit, and twice during the planet's revolution period of  $29\frac{1}{2}$  years, the rings appear to open out widest; then they slowly close until, midway between the maxima, the rings are presented edgewise to the sun or the earth, at which times they are invisible. The rings were open widest in 1973, the southern face being visible (see also "Saturn and its Satellites").

Saturn is at opposition on January 20, when its magnitude is  $-0.1$  and its apparent diameter is 18.5 arc sec. Moving westward through Cancer, it enters Gemini in late winter. On the evening of May 5, it makes a fine grouping with Mars and the crescent moon, and on May 11, at  $21^h$  E.S.T., it is 1.3° S. of Mars. Conjunction occurs on July 29, after which Saturn moves into the morning sky.

#### URANUS



Although Uranus at opposition can be seen with the unaided eye under a clear, dark sky, it was apparently unknown until 1781, when it was accidentally discovered



(telescopically) by William Herschel. It can easily be seen with binoculars, and in a telescope it shows a small, greenish, almost featureless disc. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are rather similar in the sense that their interiors consist mainly of hydrogen and helium; their atmospheres consist of these same elements, and simple compounds of hydrogen.

Throughout most of 1976, Uranus is in Virgo and passes near  $\lambda$  Vir in early January, mid-March and mid-October (see map). At opposition on April 25, its magnitude is  $+5.7$  and its apparent diameter is 3.9 arc sec.

#### NEPTUNE

The discovery of Neptune in 1846, after its existence in the sky had been predicted from independent calculations by Leverrier in France and Adams in England, was regarded as the crowning achievement of Newton's theory of universal gravitation. Actually, Neptune had been seen—but mistaken for a star—several times before its "discovery".

In 1976, Neptune is far south on the ecliptic, in Ophiuchus (see map) and not wellplaced for northern observers. At opposition on June 2 (E.S.T.), its magnitude is + 7.7 and its apparent diameter is 2.5 arc sec.



#### PLUTO

Pluto, the most distant known planet, was discovered at the Lowell Observatory in 1930, as a result of an extensive search started two decades earlier by Percival Lowell. The faint star-like image was first detected by Clyde Tombaugh by comparing photographs taken on different dates. Little is known about the exact mass, radius and density of this planet. It varies in brightness with a period of 6.4 days, apparently due to its rotation.

At opposition on March 30, its astrometric position is R.A. (1950)  $13<sup>h</sup>04<sup>m</sup>5$ , Dec.  $(1950) + 12^{\circ}06'$ , its apparent magnitude is  $+14$ , and its distance from earth is 4440 million km.

#### THE OBSERVATION OF THE MOON

During 1976 the ascending node of the moon's orbit moves from Libra into Virgo  $(\Omega)$  from 229° to 210°). See p. 61 for occultations of stars.

*The sun's selenographic colongitude* is essentially a convenient way of indicating the position of the sunrise terminator as it moves across the face of the moon. It provides an accurate method of recording the exact conditions of illumination (angle of illumination), and makes it possible to observe the moon under exactly the same lighting conditions at a later date.

The sun's selenographic colongitude is numerically equal to the selenographic longitude of the sunrise terminator reckoned eastward from the mean centre of the disk. Its value increases at the rate of nearly 12.2° per day or about  $\frac{1}{2}$ ° per hour; it is approximately 270°, 0°, 90° and 180° at New Moon, First Quarter, Full Moon and Last Quarter respectively. (See the tabulated values for 0 h U.T. starting on p. 35.)

Sunrise will occur at a given point *east* of the central meridian of the moon when the sun's selenographic colongitude is equal to the eastern selenographic longitude of the point; at a point *west* of the central meridian when the sun's selenographic colongitude is equal to 360° minus the western selenographic longitude of the point. The longitude of the sunset terminator differs by 180° from that of the sunrise terminator.

The sun's selenographic latitude varies between  $+1\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>o</sup> and  $-1\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>o</sup> during the year.

By the moon's libration is meant the shifting, or rather apparent shifting, of the visible disk. Sometimes the observer sees features farther around the eastern or the western limb (libration in longitude), or the northern or southern limb (libration in latitude). The quantities called the earth's selenographic longitude and latitude are a convenient way of indicating the two librations. When the libration in longitude, that is the selenographic longitude of the earth, is positive, the mean central point of the disk of the moon is displaced eastward on the celestial sphere, exposing to view a region on the west limb. When the libration in latitude, or the selenographic latitude of the earth, is positive, the mean central point of the disk of the moon is displaced towards the south, and a region on the north limb is exposed to view.

In the Astronomical Phenomena Month by Month the dates of the greatest positive and negative values of the libration in longitude are indicated by *l* in the column headed "Sun's Selenographic Colongitude," and their values are given in the footnotes. Similarly the extreme values of the libration in latitude are indicated by *b.*

# **THE SKY MONTH BY MONTH**

### **By John F. H eard**

*Introduction*—In the monthly descriptions of the sky on the following pages, positions of the sun and planets are given for 0 h Ephemeris Time, which differs only slightly from Standard Time on the Greenwich meridian. The times of transit at the 75th meridian are given in *local mean time*; to change to Standard Time, see p. 14. Estimates of altitude are for an observer in latitude 45° N.

*The Sun*—The values of the equation of time are for noon E.S.T. on the first and last days of the month. For times of sunrise and sunset and for changes in the length of the day, see pp. 15-20. See also p. 7.

*The Moon*—Its phases, perigee and apogee times and distances, and its conjunctions with the planets are given in the "Astronomical Phenomena Month by Month" For times of moonrise and moonset, see pp. 22–27.

*The Planets*—Further information in regard to the planets, including Pluto, is found on pp. 28-31. For the configurations of Jupiter's satellites, see "Astronomical Phenomena Month by Month", and for their eclipses, see p. 77.

In the Configurations of Jupiter's Satellites, O represents the disk of the planet, d signifies that the satellite is on the disk, \* signifies that the satellite is behind the disk or in the shadow. Configurations are for an inverting telescope.

The configurations have been read from diagrams in the *American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac.* Where two satellites are nearly coincident, it is difficult to tell the correct order of the satellites from the diagram. Such ambiguous cases are indicated by bold face type: thus 12304 may actually be 13204. An hour's observation usually reveals the correct configuration, because the apparent motion of the innermost satellites is much faster than that of the outermost. Also, the four satellites differ slightly in apparent magnitude.

Satellites move from east to west across the face of the planet, and from west to east behind it. Before opposition, shadows fall to the west, and after opposition, to the east.

*Minima of Algol*—The times of mid-eclipse are given in "Astronomical Phenomena Month by Month" and are calculated from the ephemeris

heliocentric minimum =  $2440953.4677 + 2.8673285$  E and are rounded off to the nearest ten minutes.

#### THE SKY FOR JANUARY 1976

During this month which follows the winter solstice the days are lengthening as we know, but, as you may notice from a table of sunrise and sunset, the lengthening is not symmetrical; in Toronto, for example, sunrise gets earlier by about 14 minutes, but sunset gets later by about 35 minutes. The explanation? A hint: look at what is happening to the equation of time. Contrast the situation in February.

An hour after sunset at mid-month the summer triangle (Altair, Vega, Deneb) is sinking into the west and Orion, "pride of the winter skies", is rising in the east. Jupiter, Mars and Saturn, lined up between the meridian and the eastern horizon, trace out the ecliptic for us. Have a try at observing Mercury as an evening star early in the month. And if you are awake just before dawn on a clear night you will surely see Venus.

The bright asteroid Ceres is well placed for observation during January, moving through Taurus about halfway between the Pleiades and the Hyades. Look for it with binoculars, referring to the information on pp. 74-75

*The Sun*—During January the sun's R.A. increases from 18 h 42 m to 20 h 55 m and its Decl. changes from  $23^{\circ}$  05' S. to 17° 24' S. The equation of time changes from  $-3$  m 22 s to  $-13$  m 25 s. The earth is at perihelion on the 4th at a distance of 147,102,000 km (91,405,000 miles) from the sun.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 20 h 00 m, Decl. 22° 27' S., and on the 15th is in R.A. 20 h 46 m, Decl. 16° 52′ S During the first half of the month it may be seen as an evening star very low in the south-west just after sunset. Greatest eastern elongation is on the 7th at which time Mercury is about 11 degrees above the south-western horizon at sunset. By the 23rd it is in inferior conjunction.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 15 h 51 m, Decl. 17° 52' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 17 h 01 m, Decl.  $21^{\circ}$  00' S., mag.  $-3.6$ , and transits at 9 h 28 m. It is prominent in the south-eastern sky for nearly three hours before sunrise.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 4 h 53 m, Decl.  $25^{\circ}$  43' N., mag  $-0.7$ , and transits at 21 h 14 m. Now a month past opposition and closest approach, Mars has faded by nearly a magnitude but still outshines any nearby stars. In Taurus, it is well up in the east at sunset and sets about three hours before dawn. On the 20th it is stationary in right ascension and resumes eastward motion.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 1 h 04 m, Decl.  $5^{\circ}$  29' N., mag.  $-2.0$ , and transits at 17 h 26 m. In Pisces, it is nearly on the meridian at sunset and sets at about midnight.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 8 h 09 m, Decl.  $20^{\circ}$  26' N., mag  $-0.1$ , and transits at 0 h 34 m. In Cancer, it rises about as the sun sets. Opposition is on the 20th.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 19 m, Decl. 13° 19' S., and transits at 6 h 39 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 47 m, Decl. 20° 52' S., and transits at 9 h 10 m.


## ASTRONOMICAL PHENOMENA MONTH BY MONTH

*l*Jan. 2, +4.81°; Jan. 15, -5.88°; Jan. 29, +4.86°.

 $^b$ Jan. 5,  $-$  6.65°; Jan. 19,  $+$  6.54°.

1 Visible in Central and S. America, S. Atlantic, S. Africa.

## THE SKY FOR FEBRUARY 1976

An hour after sunset at mid-month the Great Square of Pegasus is "getting away" in the west; we won't see it easily after this month. Taurus with its brightest star Aldebaran and with the Pleiades is not far from the zenith. Near Aldebaran is Mars; identify them. Which is the brighter now? Watch how Mars' distance eastward from Aldebaran increases at an accelerating rate; by the end of April it will be near Castor and Pollux. South of Taurus is Orion, now best positioned for evening observing. Take a look at the centre star of Orion's sword with binoculars and admire the great Orion Nebula.

*The Sun*—During February the sun's R.A. increases from 20 h 55 m to 22 h 48 m and its Decl. changes from  $17^{\circ}$  24' S, to  $7^{\circ}$  37' S. The equation of time changes from  $-13$  m 34 s to a maximum of  $-14$  m 17 s on the 12th and then to  $-12$  m 30 s at the end of the month.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 19 h 41 m, Decl. 18° 13' S., and on the 15th is in R.A. 20 h 05 m, Decl. 19° 44' S. It is in greatest western elongation on the 16th, so at about this time it might be seen low in the south-east just before sunrise. However, this is an unfavourable elongation, Mercury being only about 9 degrees above the horizon at sunrise.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 18 h 30 m, Decl. 22° 19' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 19 h 44 m, Decl. 21 $^{\circ}$  03' S., mag.  $-3.4$ , and transits at 10 h 09 m. It rises about an hour and a half before the sun and is only about 12 degrees above the southeastern horizon at sunrise.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 5 h 08 m, Decl.  $25^{\circ}$  42' N., mag.  $+0.2$ , and transits at 19 h 29 m. In Taurus, it is nearing the meridian at sunset and sets about three hours after midnight. Again it has faded by nearly a magnitude in the past month.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 1 h 21 m, Decl.  $7^{\circ}$  21' N., mag.  $-1.8$ , and transits at 15 h 42 m. In Pisces, it is well past the meridian at sunset and sets before midnight.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 7 h 59 m, Decl. 20 ° 59' N., mag 0.0, and transits at 22 h 17 m. In Cancer, it is well up in the east at sunset.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 20 m, Decl. 13° 25' S., and transits at 4 h 42 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 50 m, Decl. 20° 57' S., and transits at 7 h 12 m.



*l*Feb. 12, -7.07°; Feb. 24, +6.06°.

 $^{b}$ Feb. 1,  $-6.56^{\circ}$ ; Feb. 15,  $+6.53^{\circ}$ ; Feb. 28,  $-6.60^{\circ}$ .

*1*Visible in S. America.

## THE SKY FOR MARCH 1976

This is the month of the vernal equinox. Notice that this happens on March 20 this year. Can you think of a reason why it is "early" ? On this day the sun is on the equator and so we say that day and night are equal. Yet if you look at a table of sunrise and sunset for middle latitudes it will appear that the day is about 15 minutes longer than the night. This is partly because sunrise is defined as the moment when the sun's upper limb (rather than its centre) clears the horizon and partly because the refraction of the earth's atmosphere "lifts" the sun a bit. During March, the sunrise and sunset points move northward at the maximum rate. You can easily see this effect by observing the sunrise or sunset point over a period of two or three weeks.

*The Sun*—During March the sun's R.A. increases from 22 h 48 m to 0 h 42 m and its Decl. changes from  $7^{\circ}$  37' S. to  $4^{\circ}$  30' N. The equation of time changes from  $-12$  m 18 s to  $-4$  m 04 s. On the 20th at 6 h 50 m E.S.T. the sun crosses the equator on its way north, enters the sign of Aries and spring commences. This is the vernal equinox.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 21 h 21 m, Decl. 17° 05' S., and on the 15th is in R.A. 22 h 46 m, Decl. 10° 17' S. It is too close to the sun for observation this month.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 21 h 01 m, Decl. 17° 29' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 22 h 10 m, Decl.  $12^{\circ}$  27' S., mag.  $-3.3$ , and transits at 10 h 39 m. It rises barely an hour before the sun and is only about 9 degrees above the south-eastern horizon at sunrise.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 5 h 53 m, Decl. 25° 49' N., mag. +0.8, and transits at 18 h 20 m. Moving from Taurus into Gemini, it is approximately on the meridian at sunset and sets a few hours after midnight. It now matches nearby Aldebaran in brightness.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 1 h 43 m, Decl.  $9^{\circ}$  36' N., mag.  $-1.6$ , and transits at 14 h 10 m. Moving from Pisces into Aries, it is well down in the west at sunset and sets within three hours.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 7 h 53 m, Decl.  $21^{\circ}$  17' N., mag.  $+0.2$ , and transits at 20 h 18 m. Near the boundary between Cancer and Gemini, it is high in the eastern sky at sunset. On the 27th it is stationary in right ascension and resumes direct or eastward motion among the stars.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 18 m, Decl. 13° 16' S., and transits at 2 h 46 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 51 m, Decl. 20° *51'* S., and transits at 5 h 19 m.



*l*Mar. 11, -7.93°; Mar. 23, +7.09°. *b*Mar. 13, +6.61°; Mar. 26, -6.73°.

*1*Visible in N. America.

## THE SKY FOR APRIL 1976

Notice in the section on eclipses that a partial eclipse of the sun on the 29th will be visible in some parts of North America. April-May and October-November are the eclipse seasons now, but 1976 is a poor eclipse year for North America.

Notice that the greatest eastern elongation of Mercury on the 27th is called a very favourable one. This is because the ecliptic east of the setting sun at this season in middle latitudes is nearly perpendicular to the horizon, so the altitude of Mercury at sunset is nearly as great as its angular distance from the sun (21°).

Mars, though a good deal fainter than before, should be identifiable. Watch it move rapidly eastward towards Saturn. Jupiter moves "into" the sun this month and we lose it for a while.

There is an occultation of e Gem by Mars at almost exactly 20.00 E.S.T. on the 7th. This is visible over much of North America.

*The Sun*—During April the sun's R.A. increases from 0 h 42 m to 2 h 33 m and its Decl. changes from  $4^{\circ}$  30' N. to 15° 03' N. The equation of time changes from  $-3$  m 46 s to  $+2$  m 51 s, being zero on the 15th. There is an annular eclipse of the sun on the 29th which is visible as a partial eclipse near the lower St. Lawrence, in the Atlantic provinces and the New England states.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 0 h 41 m, Decl. 3° 08' N., and on the 15th is in R.A. 2 h 25 m, Decl. 15° 43' N. It is in superior conjunction on the 1st, and by the 27th it is in greatest eastern elongation, a very favourable one, at which time Mercury is nearly 19 degrees above the western horizon at sunset. During the last two weeks of the month it should be easy to see. On the evening of the 12th it is about 2° north of Jupiter which should facilitate locating it.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 23 h 29 m, Decl. 4° 55' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 0 h 32 m, Decl.  $1^{\circ}51'$  N., mag.  $-3.3$ , and transits at 11 h 00 m. It rises in the east just about half an hour before the sun.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 6 h 58 m, Decl. 24° 46' N., mag. +1.3, and transits at 17 h 23 m. Moving rapidly through Gemini, it is now past the meridian at sunset and sets soon after midnight. It is no longer prominent among the nearby stars, but once located it will be interesting to watch it move eastward towards Saturn (see May).

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 2 h 11 m, Decl.  $12^{\circ}$  08' N., mag.  $-1.6$ , and transits at 12 h 35 m. It is visible low in the west just after sunset early in the month, but by the 27th it is in conjunction with the sun.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 7 h 54 m, Decl.  $21^{\circ}$  17' N., mag.  $+0.4$ , and transits at 18 h 17 m. In Cancer, it is close to the meridian at sunset and sets after midnight. See Mars.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 14 m, Decl. 12° 53' S., and transits at 0 h 40 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 50 m, Decl. 20° 54 'S., and transits at 3 h 16 m.



*l*Apr. 8, -8.01°; Apr. 20, +7.36°.

*b*Apr. 10, +6.75°; Apr. 22, -6.83°.

*1*Visible in Central and S. America.

## THE SKY FOR MAY 1976

If you missed seeing Mercury last month look low in the west just after sunset early this month.

An hour after sunset at mid-month Gemini is sinking into the west. Identify Castor and Pollux and watch Saturn and Mars move eastward across the southerly extension of the line joining them, Mars moving more rapidly than Saturn and passing it within a degree and a half on the 11th.

*The Sun*—During May the sun's R.A. increases from 2 h 33 m to 4 h 36 m and its Decl. changes from  $15^{\circ}$  03' N., to 22° 02' N. The equation of time changes from  $+ 2$  m 59 s to a maximum of  $+ 3$  m 42 s on the 15th and then to  $+ 2$  m 20 s at the end of the month.

*The Moon*—There is a partial eclipse of the moon on the 13th but this is not visible in any part of North America.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 3 h 52 m, Decl. 22° 57' N., and on the 15th is in R.A. 4 h 01 m, Decl. 21° 03' N. For the first week of the month it should be seen quite easily low in the west just after sunset, but by the 20th it is in inferior conjunction.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 1 h 45 m, Decl. 9° 27' N., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 2 h 52 m, Decl.  $15^{\circ}$  23' N., mag.  $-3.4$ , and transits at 11 h 21 m. It is difficult to observe, rising just minutes before the sun at mid-month.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 8 h 07 m, Decl. 21 $\degree$  56' N., mag.  $+1.6$ , and transits at 16 h 34 m. Moving into Cancer, it is now well past the meridian at sunset and sets at about midnight. It is no longer prominent in brightness. Late on the 11th (at 21 h E.S.T.) Mars and Saturn are in conjunction, Mars being 1°3 north.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 2 h 38 m, Decl.  $14^{\circ}$  27' N., mag  $-1.6$ , and transits at 11 h 05 m. In the latter part of the month it is easy to observe as a morning star rising to the north of east before the sun. On the morning of the 27th the proximity of Jupiter and the crescent moon will be a pretty sight.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 8 h 01 m, Decl.  $20^{\circ}$  58' N., mag.  $+0.5$ , and transits at 16 h 26 m. In Cancer, it is well past the meridian at sunset and sets at about midnight. See Mars.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 09 m, Decl. 12° 29' S., and transits at 22 h 33 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 48 m, Decl. 20° 49' S., and transits at 1 h 15 m.



*l*May 6, -7.26°; May 19, +7.01°.

*b*May 7, + 6.82°; May 19, - 6.79°.

*1*Visible in N. America.

#### THE SKY FOR JUNE 1976

The summer solstice is on the 21st, the sun being then at its farthest north of the equator at declination  $+23^{\circ} 26'$ . So in middle northerly latitudes we have our longest day, the sun rising at about  $60^\circ$  east of north and setting about  $60^\circ$  west of north, and climbing to an altitude of about  $68\frac{1}{2}$ ° at mid-day (for latitude 45° N). It is a combination of the most direct rays and the longest daily sunlight that gives us the maximum heating effect at this time. (But why, then, does our hottest weather usually come a month or more later ? Accumulation is the answer.)

Realizing that the full moon is always exactly opposite to the sun in the sky, what will be noteworthy about the diurnal path of the full moon this month?

*The Sun*—During June the sun's R.A. increases from 4 h 36 m to 6 h 40 m and its Decl. changes from  $22^{\circ}$  02' N. to  $23^{\circ}$  07' N. The equation of time changes from  $+ 2$  m 11 s to  $- 3$  m 40 s, being zero on the 13th. The summer solstice is on the 21st at 1 h 24 m E.S.T.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 3 h 34 m, Decl. 15° 27' N., and on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 59 m, Decl. 16° 53' N. On the 15th it is in greatest western elongation and may be glimpsed low in the east just before sunrise. However, this is an unfavourable elongation, Mercury being only 11 degrees above the horizon at sunrise.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 4 h 17 m, Decl.  $20^{\circ}$  53' N, and on the 15th it is in R.A. 5 h 30 m, Decl.  $23^{\circ}$  24' N., mag.  $-3.5$ , and transits at 11 h 57 m. It is too close to the sun all month for easy observation, superior conjunction being on the 17th.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 9 h 19 m, Decl.  $17^{\circ}$  02' N., mag.  $+1.8$ , and transits at 15 h 44 m. Moving from Cancer into Leo, it is well down in the west at sunset and sets about three hours later.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 06 m, Decl.  $16^{\circ}$  30' N., mag.  $-1.6$ , and transits at 9 h 31 m. In Aries it rises to the north of east about two hours before the sun. It will be interesting to observe Jupiter relative to the crescent moon on the mornings of the 23rd and the 24th as the moon passes from a few degrees west of Jupiter to a few degrees east of him.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 8 h 14 m, Decl.  $20^{\circ}$  22' N., mag.  $+0.5$ , and transits at 14 h 37 m. In Cancer, it is well down in the west at sunset and sets about two hours later.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 05 m, Decl. 12° 09' S., and transits at 20 h 27 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 44 m, Decl. 20° 43' S., and transits at 23 h 06 m.



*l*June2, -6.01°; June 16, + 6.22°; June29, -5.14°.

*b*June3, +6.74°; June 16, —6.70°; June 30, +6.60°.

<sup>1</sup>Visible in Central and S. America.

## THE SKY FOR JULY 1976

Early this month the earth is in aphelion; early in January it was at perihelion. The difference in distance from earth to sun between these two extremes is about 5,000,000 km or 3.3 per cent, which makes a difference in radiant heat received by the earth of nearly 7 per cent. Thus for the northern hemisphere the difference tends to warm our winters and cool our summers. However, the preponderance of large land masses in the northern hemisphere works the other way and tends to make our winters colder and summers hotter than those of the southern hemisphere.

*The Sun*—During July the sun's R.A. increases from 6 h 40 m to 8 h 45 m and its Decl. changes from 23° *01'* N., to 18° 02' N. The equation of time changes from  $-3$  m 51 s to a maximum of  $-6$  m 27 s on the 26th and then to  $-6$  m 18 s at the end of the month. The earth is in aphelion on the 3rd at a distance of 152,101,000 km (94,511,000 miles) from the sun.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 5 h 30 m, Decl. 22° *21'* N., and on the 15th is in R.A. 7 h 36 m, Decl. 23° 06' N. It is too close to the sun for observation, superior conjunction being on the 15th. However, a close conjunction with Venus on the 24th (at 9 h E.S.T., Mercury passing  $0^{\circ}$ 4 north) offers an interesting opportunity to locate Mercury in the twilight sky by observing Venus on the evenings of the 23rd and 24th in binoculars or by wide-field telescope.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 6 h 56 m, Decl. 23° 33' N., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 8 h 10 m, Decl.  $21^{\circ}$  16' N., mag.  $-3.4$ , and transits at 12 h 39 m. It is an evening star now, and at mid-month it stands about 6 degrees above the north-western horizon at sunset.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 10 h 28 m, Decl.  $10^{\circ}$  42' N., mag.  $+1.9$ , and transits at 14 h 55 m. In Leo, it is well down in the west at sunset and sets within about two hours. On the evening of the 5th it is less than a degree north of Regulus.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 30 m, Decl.  $17^{\circ}$  59' N., mag.  $-1.8$ , and transits at 7 h 57 m. Moving into Taurus, it rises at about midnight. Between the mornings of the 21st and the 22nd the waning moon switches from west to east of Jupiter and in New Zealand an occultation will be visible.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 8 h 29 m, Decl.  $19^{\circ}$  34' N., mag.  $+0.5$ , and transits at 12 h 54 m. It is too close to the sun for easy observation. On the 29th it is in conjunction with the sun.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 04 m, Decl. 12° 05' S., and transits at 18 h 28 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 41 m, Decl. 20° 38' S., and transits at 21 h 05 m.



<sup>*l*</sup>July 14,  $+5.37^{\circ}$ ; July 26,  $-5.25^{\circ}$ .

*b*July 13, -6.58°; July 27, +6.51°.

#### THE SKY FOR AUGUST 1976

This month we have, on the 26th, a greatest eastern elongation of Mercury which normally results in a good opportunity to see Mercury as an evening star. (See, for example April.) But, whereas in April the ecliptic east of the setting sun was steep relative to the horizon, in August it is very oblique and, in addition, Mercury is about 4 degrees south of the ecliptic. Thus while Mercury on the 26th is 27 degrees east of the sun along the ecliptic, it is only about 6 degrees above the western horizon at sunset and so very low indeed when it is dark enough to see the planet. This is therefore a very unfavourable elongation.

*The Sun*—During August the sun's R.A. increases from 8 h 45 m to 10 h 41 m and its Decl. changes from  $18^{\circ}$  02' N. to  $8^{\circ}$  19' N. The equation of time changes from  $-6$  m 15 s to  $-0$  m 09 s.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 9 h 53 m, Decl. 14° 20' N., and on the 15th is in R.A. 11 h 12 m, Decl. 4° 44' N. On the 26th it is in greatest eastern elongation, but this is a very unfavourable one, Mercury being scarcely 6 degrees above the western horizon at sunset.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 9 h 35 m, Decl. 15° 53' N., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 10 h 41 m, Decl.  $9^{\circ}$  51' N., mag.  $-3.\overline{3}$ , and transits at 13 h 08 m. It is an evening star standing about 8 degrees above the western horizon at sunset and setting within an hour.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 11 h 40 m, Decl.  $3^{\circ}$  01' N., mag.  $+1.9$ , and transits at 14 h 04 m. Moving from Leo into Virgo, it is now so low in the west at sunset as to be difficult to observe.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 49 m, Decl.  $18^{\circ}$  58' N., mag.  $-1.9$ , and transits at 6 h 13 m. In Taurus, it rises late in the evening. During the night of the 17th—18th it will be interesting to watch the moon overtake and pass Jupiter, being just  $1^\circ$  south of him at 04 hours E.S.T. In the southern part of South America this will be seen as an occultation.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 8 h 45 m, Decl.  $18^{\circ}$  37' N., mag.  $+0.5$ , and transits at 11 h 09 m. It is now in the morning sky but too close to the sun for easy observation.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 06 m, Decl. 12° 16' S., and transits at 16 h 28 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 40 m, Decl. 20° 37' S., and transits at 19 h 01 m.



<sup>*l*</sup>Aug. 10, +5.06°; Aug. 22, -6.06°.

*b*Aug. 9, - 6.55°; Aug. 24, + 6.56°.

1Visible in S. America.

2Visible in N. America.

## THE SKY FOR SEPTEMBER 1976

The autumnal equinox occurs on the 22nd. On that day if you are at latitude  $44^{\circ}$  N what is the meridian altitude of the sun? Is the interval from sunrise to sunset on the 22nd equal to the interval from sunset on the 22nd to sunrise on the 23rd ? What two factors account for the inequality? Forgotten? See March.

Refer back to March relative to the rapid rate of change of the sunrise and sunset points at the time of the equinoxes.

An hour after sunset at mid-month we have Arcturus in the west, Antares in the south-west, and near the zenith we have the summer triangle of Altair, Vega and Deneb. Of these five famous stars can you find out from the Handbook which is the brightest, which the reddest, which the closest, which the most luminous (intrinsically)?

*The Sun*—During September the sun's R.A. increases from 10 h 41 m to 12 h 29 m and its Decl. changes from  $8^{\circ}$  19' N. to  $3^{\circ}$  09' S. The equation of time changes from  $+0$  m 10 s to  $+10$  m 09 s. On the 22nd at 15 h 48 m E.S.T. the sun crosses the equator moving southward, enters the sign of Libra and autumn commences.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 1 h 14 m, Decl. 4° 51' S., and on the 15th is in R.A. 12 h 15 m, Decl. 6° 05' S. It is too close to the sun for observation until the end of the month, inferior conjunction being on the 22nd. However, by month's end it may be seen just before sunrise low in the east.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 11 h 59 m, Decl. 1° 26' N., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 13 h 01 m, Decl.  $5^{\circ}$  45' S., mag.  $-3.3$ , and transits at 13 h 25 m. It is an evening star about 9 degrees above the western horizon at sunset and setting within an hour. On the evening of the 25th Venus and the crescent moon will make a pretty sight in the west. Also see Mars on this page.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 12 h 53 m, Decl.  $5^{\circ}$  09' S., mag.  $+1.9$ , and transits at 13 h 15 m. It is too close to the sun for easy observation, though on the evening of the 10th when it is in conjunction with Venus (passing 0?4 south at 17 h E.S.T.) it would be interesting to locate Mars by observing Venus by binocular in the twilight sky.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 57 m, Decl. 19 $^{\circ}$  19' N., mag.  $-2.1$ , and transits at 4 h 19 m. In Taurus, it rises about three hours after sunset. On the 19th it is stationary in right ascension and begins to retrograde, or move westward, among the stars.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 9 h 00 m, Decl.  $17^{\circ}$  40' N., mag.  $+0.6$ , and transits at 9 h 22 m. In Cancer, it rises about three hours before the sun.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 11 m, Decl.  $12^{\circ}$  42' S., and transits at 14 h 31 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 40 m, Decl. 20<sup>°</sup> 39' S., and transits at 17 h 00 m.



*l*Sept. 5, + 5.73°; Sept. 19, -6.94°.

*b*Sept. 5, -6.63°; Sept. 20, +6.73°.

## THE SKY FOR OCTOBER 1976

I wonder how many astronomy enthusiasts ever rationalize the position and phase of the moon. Take this month, for example. We see from the preceding page that new moon was on Sept. 23 and first quarter on Sept. 30. Therefore on Oct. 1 the moon is 8 days old and about a day past first quarter. Where will we expect to see it that evening as the sun sets ? Well, for one thing it will be near the ecliptic (the moon's orbit plane is tilted only about 5 degrees to the earth's orbit plane or ecliptic) and somewhat more than 90 degrees east of the sun, so about an hour east of the meridian. Will it be high or low in altitude? Well, since it is somewhat more than 90 degrees along (or nearly along) the ecliptic eastward of the sun, it must have declination about the same as the sun will have in three month's time, namely about Jan. 1, therefore nearly as far south as it ever is, i.e. about 23 degrees south. And this means its altitude as it approaches the meridian is very low, say in the neighbourhood of 20 degrees for those of us near latitude  $44^{\circ}$  N. This kind of mental gymnastics can deceive us by as much as the 5 degrees by which the moon's orbit is inclined to the earth's orbit, and in fact it did so in our example because the moon is almost exactly 5 degrees north of the ecliptic on the 1st so a more accurate altitude for the moon at sunset is 25 degrees.

*The Sun*—During October the sun's R.A. increases from 12 h 29 m to 14 h 25 m and its Decl. changes from  $3^{\circ}$  09' S. to 14 $^{\circ}$  24' S. The equation of time changes from  $+10$  m 28 s to  $+16$  m 22 s. A total eclipse of the sun on the 23rd will not be visible in this hemisphere.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 11 h 35 m, Decl.  $2^{\circ}$  42' N., and on the 15th is in R.A. 12 h 26 m, Decl. 0° 41' S. Greatest western elongation is on the 7th, a favourable one, Mercury then standing about 17 degrees above the eastern horizon at sunrise. Thus until past mid-month Mercury will be easily found near the eastern horizon just before sunrise.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 14 h 14 m, Decl. 13° 29' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 15 h 22 m, Decl.  $19^{\circ}$  11' S., mag.  $-3.4$ , and transits at 13 h 48 m. It is about 10 degrees above the south-western horizon at sunset and sets about an hour later.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 08 m, Decl.  $12^{\circ}$  46' S., mag.  $+1.8$ , and transits at 12 h 32 m. It is too close to the sun for easy observation.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 53 m, Decl.  $19^{\circ}$  04' N., mag.  $-2.3$ , and transits at 2 h 17 m. In Taurus, it rises about two hours after sunset and on the 11th will be about 1° north of the moon.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 9 h 11 m, Decl.  $16^{\circ}$  55' N., mag.  $+0.6$ , and transits at 7 h 35 m. In Cancer, it rises about at midnight.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 17 m, Decl. 13° 16' S., and transits at 12 h 40 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 43 m, Decl. 20° 46' S., and transits at 15 h 05 m.



*l*Oct. 2, +6.96°; Oct. 17, -7.42°; Oct. 30, +7.80°.

 $\alpha$  ,  $\beta$ 

*b*Oct. 2, -6.74°; Oct. 17, +6.83°; Oct. 30, -6.82°.

## THE SKY FOR NOVEMBER 1976

Will the penumbral eclipse of the moon on the night of Nov. 6 be perceptible by eye? Textbooks say only if the moon passes within 700 miles of the umbra. Let us see if this eclipse meets this criterion. At the moon's distance the average diameter of the earth's umbral shadow is about 5700 miles, of the penumbral shadow about 10,000 miles; and the moon's diameter is 2160 miles. The Handbook's section on eclipses says that the magnitude of this penumbral eclipse is 0.86, meaning that at mideclipse this fraction of the moon's diameter is within the penumbra. This fraction of 2160 is 1952 miles. The difference between the umbral radius and the penumbral is  $\frac{1}{2}(10,000 - 5700) = 2150$ . Thus the edge of the moon comes within 2150 - 1952 = 198 miles of the umbra. So the darkening of about one quarter of the moon's diameter should be perceptible. Draw a diagram of the event to scale and see if our conclusion looks reasonable.

*The Sun*—During November the sun's R.A. increases from 14 h 25 m to 16 h 29 m and its Decl. changes from  $14^{\circ}$  24' S. to 21 $^{\circ}$  47' S. The equation of time changes from  $+16$  m 23 s to a maximum of  $+16$  m 24 s on the 3rd and then to  $+11$  m 09 s at the end of the month.

*The Moon*—A penumbral eclipse of the moon will be visible in most of North America on the night of the 6th.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 14 h 11 m, Decl. 12° 18' S., and on the 15th is in R.A. 15 h 39 m, Decl. 20° 14' S. Superior conjunction is on the 7th and the planet remains too close to the sun for observation all month.

*Venus on* the 1st is in R.A. 16 h 49 m, Decl. 23° 54' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 18 h 03 m, Decl.  $25^{\circ}$  25' S., mag.  $-3.5$ , and transits at 14 h 27 m. It is quite prominent low in the south-western sky for about two hours after sunset.

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 15 h 33 m, Decl.  $19^{\circ}$  21' S., mag.  $+1.6$ , and transits at 11 h 56 m. It is too close to the sun for observation, conjunction being on the 25th.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 38 m, Decl. 18 $^{\circ}$  17' N., mag.  $-2.4$ , and transits at 0 h 00 m and 23 h 56 m (two transits on the same date!) In Taurus, it rises at about sunset and is visible all night. At about 20 hours on the 7th Jupiter passes  $1^\circ$  north of the moon. On the 18th Jupiter is at opposition.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 9 h 18 m, Decl.  $16^{\circ}$  32' N., mag.  $+0.6$ , and transits at 5 h 39 m. Near the boundary between Cancer and Leo, it rises before midnight On the 28th it is stationary in right ascension and begins to retrograde, or move westward, among the stars.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 25 m, Decl. 13° 54' S., and transits at 10 h 46 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 47 m, Decl. 20° 54' S., and transits at 13 h 07 m.



*l*Nov. 15, -7.21°; Nov. 27, +7.81°.

*b*Nov. 13,  $+6.78^{\circ}$ ; Nov. 26,  $-6.75^{\circ}$ .

\*The behaviour of this shower is rather unpredictable, but it is not expected to be conspicuous.

## THE SKY FOR DECEMBER 1976

The winter solstice is on the 21st at 12.36 E.S.T. Let us also write down the dates and times of the vernal equinox, summer solstice and autumnal equinox, and let us also toss in the date and time of last year's winter solstice from the 1975 Handbook (Dec. 22 6.40 E.S.T.). Now let us calculate the intervals WS to VE, VE to SS, SS to AE and AE to WS. They are not equal, are they? Why not? Historical note: this is precisely how Hipparchus in the 2nd century B.C. calculated fairly accurately the time of the closest approach of the sun to the earth, although he believed that the sun moved around the earth on an eccentric circle, whereas we know that it is the earth which moves about the sun on an ellipse.

Look back to the note about the diurnal path of June's full moon and answer the same question about December's full moon.

*The Sun*—During December the sun's R.A. increases from 16 h 29 m to 18 h 46 m and its Decl. changes from  $21^{\circ}$  47' S. to  $23^{\circ}$  02' S. The equation of time changes from  $+10$  m 46 s to  $-3$  m 15 s, being zero on the 25th. The winter solstice occurs on the 21st at 12 h 36 m E.S.T.

*Mercury* on the 1st is in R.A. 17 h 24 m, Decl. 25° 16' S., and on the 15th is in R.A. 18 h 54 m, Decl. 25° 02' S. Greatest eastern elongation is on the 20th, but this is an unfavourable one, Mercury being only about 10 degrees above the south-western horizon at sunset.

*Venus* on the 1st is in R.A. 19 h 27 m, Decl. 24° 13' S., and on the 15th it is in R.A. 20 h 38 m, Decl. 20 $^{\circ}$  48' S., mag.  $-3.7$ , and transits at 15 h 03 m. It is quite prominent in the south-western sky for about three hours after sunset

*Mars* on the 15th is in R.A. 17 h 05 m, Decl. 23 $^{\circ}$  18' S., mag.  $+1.6$ , and transits at 11 h 29 m. Though now in the morning sky it is too close to the sun for observation.

*Jupiter* on the 15th is in R.A. 3 h 23 m, Decl.  $17^{\circ}$  28' N., mag.  $-2.3$ , and transits at 21 h 43 m. Moving from Taurus westward into Aries, it is now well up in the east at sunset and is visible until nearly dawn. At about 19 hours on the 4th Jupiter is less than a degree north of the moon.

*Saturn* on the 15th is in R.A. 9 h 17 m, Decl.  $16^{\circ}$  39' N., mag.  $+0.4$ , and transits at 3 h 41 m. Near the boundary between Cancer and Leo, it rises in the late evening.

*Uranus* on the 15th is in R.A. 14 h 31 m, Decl. 14° 26' S., and transits at 8 h 54 m.

*Neptune* on the 15th is in R.A. 16 h 51 m, Decl.  $21^{\circ}$  03' S., and transits at 11 h 14 m.



*l*Dec. 13, —6.23°; Dec. 25, +7.01°.

 $b$ Dec. 11, +6.65°; Dec. 23, -6.59°.

*1*Visible in S. America.



## SUN—EPHEMERIS FOR PHYSICAL OBSERVATIONS, 1976 For 0 h U.T.

*P*—is the position angle of the axis of rotation, measured eastward from the north point on the disk, *B0* is the heliographic latitude of the centre of the disk, and  $L_0$  is the heliographic longitude of the centre of the disk, from Carrington's solar meridian, measured in the direction of rotation.

# Carrington's Rotation Numbers—Greenwich Date of<br>Commencement of Synodic Rotation, 1976



#### SUN-SPOTS

The diagram compares the sun-spot activity for cycles 19, 20 (immediately past) and 21 (beginning in 1975), with the mean of that for cycles 8 to 19. Sun-spot activity was expected to reach a minimum by the end of 1975. The first sun-spot of cycle 21 was observed by Waldmeier on Nov. 15, 1974 at solar latitude 37° N.



ECLIPSES DURING 1976

In 1976 there will be four eclipses, two of the sun and two of the moon.

1. *An annular eclipse o f the sun* on April 29, beginning in mid Atlantic, tracking across north-west Africa, southern Asia and ending in China. It is visible as a partial eclipse along the shores of the St. Lawrence from about Montreal eastward and throughout the Atlantic provinces and the New England states. Mid-eclipse will be at about 5:30 a.m. A.S.T. in these regions and the duration will be about 40 minutes.

2. *A partial eclipse of the moon* on May 13, not visible in North America.

3. *A total eclipse of the sun* on October 23, beginning in east Africa, tracking across the Indian Ocean and the extreme southern part of Australia and ending in the south Pacific.

4. *A penumbral eclipse of the moon* on the night of Nov. 6, visible in part in North America except in the north-western section.



## PLANETARY APPULSES AND OCCULTATIONS

A planetary appulse is a close approach of a star and a solar system object, as seen from the earth. According to Gordon E. Taylor, of H.M. Nautical Almanac Office, the following appulses will occur in 1976, and may be of interest to observers. The geocentric separation, in declination, is given in the sense planet *minus* star. The horizontal parallax is the angle subtended at the planet by the earth's equatorial radius. Times are given in U.T.; to get E.S.T., subtract 5 hours.



Three of the appulses give rise to observable occultations: that of SAO 77347 by Vesta is visible from western Australia, that of SAO 153844 by Pallas is possibly visible from part of western North America. Detailed predictions will be issued by Mr. Taylor at a later date. The occultation of  $\varepsilon$  Gem by Mars is widely visible, as follows:



### OCCULTATIONS BY THE MOON

The moon often passes between the earth and a star; the phenomenon is called an occultation. During an occultation a star suddenly disappears as the east limb of the moon crosses the line between the star and observer. This is referred to as immersion (I). The reappearance from behind the west limb of the moon is called emersion (E). Because the moon moves through an angle about equal to its own diameter every hour, the longest time for an occultation is about an hour. The time can be shorter if the occultation is not central. Occultations are equivalent to total solar eclipses, except that they are total eclipses of stars other than the sun.

The elongation of the moon is its angular distance from the sun, in degrees, counted eastward around the sky. Thus, elongations of 0°, 90°, 180° and 270° correspond to new, first quarter, full and last quarter moon. When elongation is less than 180°, a star will disappear at the dark limb and reappear at the bright limb. If the elongation is greater than 180° the reverse is true.

As in the case of eclipses, the times of immersion and emersion and the duration of the occultation are different for different places on the earth's surface. The tables given below, are adapted from data supplied by the British Nautical Almanac Office and give the times of immersion or emersion or both for occultations visible from six stations distributed across Canada. Stars of magnitude 7.5 or brighter are included as well as daytime occultations of very bright stars and planets. Since an occultation at the bright limb of the moon is difficult to observe the predictions are limited to phenomena occurring at the dark limb.

The terms *a* and *b* are for determining corrections to the times of the phenomena for stations within 300 miles of the standard stations. Thus if  $\lambda_0$ ,  $\phi_0$ , be the longitude and latitude of the standard station and  $\lambda$ ,  $\phi$ , the longitude and latitude of the neighbouring station then for the neighbouring station we have: Standard Time of phenomenon = Standard Time of phenomenon at the standard station  $+a(\lambda - \lambda_0)$  $+ b(\phi - \phi_0)$  where  $\lambda - \lambda_0$  and  $\phi - \phi_0$  are expressed in degrees. This formula must be evaluated with due regard for the algebraic signs of the terms. The quantity *P* is the position angle of the point of contact on the moon's disk reckoned from the north point towards the east.

Since observing occultations is rather easy, provided the weather is good and the equipment is available, timing occultations should be part of any amateur's observing program. The method of timing is as follows: Using as large a telescope as is available, with a medium power eyepiece, the observer starts a stopwatch at the time of immersion or emersion. The watch is stopped again on a time signal from a WWV or CHU station. The elapsed time is read from the stopwatch and is then subtracted from the standard time signal to obtain the time of occultation. All times should be recorded to 0.1 second and all timing errors should be held to within 0.5 second if possible. The position angle *P* of the point of contact on the moon's disk reckoned from the north point towards the east may also be estimated.

The following information should be included: (1) Description of the star (catalogue number), (2) Date, (3) Derived time of the occultation, (4) Longitude and latitude to nearest second of arc, height above sea level to the nearest 100 feet, (5) Seeing conditions, (6) Stellar magnitude, (7) Immersion or emersion, (8) At dark or light limb; Presence or absence of earthshine, (9) Method used, (10) Estimate of accuracy, (11) Anomalous appearance: gradual disappearance, pausing on the limb. All occultation data should be sent to the world clearing house for occultation data: H.M. Nautical Almanac Office, Royal Greenwich Observatory, Herstmonceux Castle, Hailsham, Sussex, England.

The co-ordinates of the standard stations are given in the tables.



## **LUNAR OCCULTATIONS VISIBLE AT HALIFAX AND MONTREAL, 1976**



## **LUNAR OCCULTATIONS VISIBLE AT TORONTO AND WINNIPEG, 1976**







**LUNAR OCCULTATIONS VISIBLE AT EDMONTON AND VANCOUVER, 1976**







## **NAMES OF OCCULTED STARS**

The stars which are occulted by the moon are stars which lie along the zodiac; hence they are known by their number in the "Zodiacal Catalogue" (ZC), compiled by James Robertson and published in the *Astronomical Papers Prepared for the Use o f the American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac*, vol. 10, pt. 2 (U.S. Govt. Printing Office; Washington, 1940). The other names listed in the table are either (1) Bayer names, in which small Greek letters are used for the brighter stars in a constellation and Roman letters, if necessary, for the fainter stars (2) Flamsteed names, in which the stars are numbered consecutively from west to east across the constellation (3) numbers in the catalogues of Bode  $(B<sub>l</sub>)$ , Heis  $(H<sup>1</sup>)$ , Gould  $(G<sub>l</sub>)$  and Hevelius  $(H<sub>l</sub>)$ or (4) numbers in the *Bonner Durchmusterung* or BD catalogue (e.g. +18° 325).



## **BY L. V. MORRISON**

The maps show the tracks of stars brighter than  $7<sup>m</sup>5$  which will graze the limb of the Moon when it is at a favourable elongation from the Sun and at least 10° above the observer's horizon (5° in the case of stars brighter than  $5^{\omega}5$  and  $2^{\circ}$  for those brighter than 3m.5). Each track starts in the West at some arbitrary time given in the tables and ends beyond the area of interest, except where the letters *A, B* or *S* are given. *A* denotes that the Moon is at a low altitude, *B* that the bright limb interferes, and *S* that daylight interferes. The tick marks along the tracks denote 10 minute intervals of time which, when added to the time at the beginning of the track, give the approximate time of the graze at places along the tracks.

Observers positioned on, or very near, one of these tracks will probably see the star disappear and reappear several times at the edge of features on the limb of the Moon. The recorded times of these events (to a precision of a second, if possible) are very valuable in the study of the shape and motion of the Moon currently being investigated at the Royal Greenwich Observatory and the U.S. Naval Observatory. Observers situated near to any of these tracks who are interested should write to Dr. David W. Dunham, Cincinnati Observatory, Observatory Place, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45208, U.S.A., at least two months before the event, giving their approximate latitude and longitude, and details of the event will be supplied. $*$ 

The following table gives, for each track, the date, the name, Zodiacal Catalogue number and magnitude of the star, the time (U.T.) at the beginning of the track in the West, the percent of the Moon sunlit and whether the track is the northern (N) or southern (S) limit of the occultation. An asterisk after the track number refers the reader to the notes following the table; a dagger indicates that the star is a spectroscopic binary.

The numbering of the graze tracks differs slightly from that in previous years; there is no longer a continuous sequence. This arises from the method of preparing and editing the maps. It is easier and safer to preserve the original computer sequential numbering, even when certain tracks are later eliminated.



\**Editor's Note*: A nominal fee is now charged for this service.



## NOTES ON DOUBLE STARS

- *Track 20:* ZC 760 is the mean of the double star ADS 3672. The components are 7.70 and 7.76; separation  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in p.a. 306°.
- *Track 24: ZC* 2275 is the mean of the double star ADS 9834. The components are  $6 \cdot 0$  and  $8 \cdot 1$ ; separation  $0 \cdot 5$  in p.a. 121 $^{\circ}$ .
- *Track 28: ZC* 1397 is the mean of the double star ADS 7390. The components are 5<sup>m</sup>. 5m9 and 6m5; separation 0. <sup>7</sup>. Supper and  $6.5$ <sup>n</sup> and  $6.5$ <sup>n</sup>; separation 0. <sup>7</sup>. Supper and  $6.8$ <sup>n</sup>.
- *Track 31: ZC* 2968 is the brighter component of the double star ADS 13717. The companion is 10th magnitude; separation 0.'8 in p.a. 84°.
- *Track 76: ZC* 3344 is the mean of the two brightest components of the system ADS 16270. These components are  $7<sup>m3</sup>$  and  $7<sup>m8</sup>$ ; separation 2.4 in p.a. 278°. A third component 8<sup>m</sup>, has a separation of 49<sup> $\prime\prime$ </sup> in p.a. 98°.
- *Track 77: ZC* 3366 is the brighter component of the double star ADS 16392. The companion is 10th magnitude; separation  $10\degree$  4 in p.a.  $117^\circ$ .
- *Track 78: ZC* 1309 is the mean of a close double star. The components are both estimated to be  $6m.4$  with separation 0. 05.
- *Track 79: ZC* 1566 is the mean of a possible close double star. The components are both estimated to be  $7<sup>m</sup>3$  with separation  $0''03$ .








#### MAP OF THE MOON



South appears at the top.

# MARS—LONGITUDE OF THE CENTRAL MERIDIAN

The following table lists the longitude of the central meridian of the geometric disk of Mars for each date at 0 hours U.T. (19 hours E.S.T. on the preceding date). To obtain the longitude of the central meridian for other times, add 14.6° for each hour elapsed since 0 hours U.T.







Latitude is plotted on the vertical axis (south at the top); longitude is plotted on the horizontal axis

### ASTEROIDS—EPHEMERIDES AT OPPOSITION, 1976

Only one of the four major asteroids—Juno—comes to opposition in 1976. Nevertheless, all four will be prominent at some time during the year. Early in 1976, Ceres will be bright, and moves through the region between the Hyades and the Pleiades (see map). Juno comes to opposition on March 1, mag. 8.7 in Sextans; by April it is near Regulus (see map). Pallas approaches opposition late in 1976, but is rather far south (in Pyxis) for northern observers (see map). Vesta also approaches opposition late in 1976, but is much brighter and more conspicuous than Pallas, as it moves in retrograde fashion through Gemini (see map).

The following table lists the 1950 co-ordinates (for convenience in plotting on the *Atlas Coeli)* and the visual magnitudes of the four major asteroids on selected dates, at 0 h U.T.



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JUPITER-LONGITUDE OF CENTRAL MERIDIAN JUPITER—LONGITUDE OF CENTRAL MERIDIAN

The table lists the longitude of the central meridian of the illuminated disk of Jupiter at  $0^{\text{h}}$  U.T. daily during the period when the planet is favourably placed. Longitude increases hourly by 36.58° in System I (which applies to regions between the middle of the North Equatorial Belt and the middle of the South Equatorial Belt) and by 36.26° in System II (which applies to the rest of the planet). Detailed ancillary Belt and the middle of the South Equatorial Belt) and by 36.26° in System II (which applies to the rest of the planet). Detailed ancillary The table lists the longitude of the central meridian of the illuminated disk of Jupiter at  $0<sup>6</sup>$  U.T. daily during the period when the planet is favourably placed. Longitude increases hourly by 36.58° in System I (which applies to regions between the middle of the North Equatorial tables may be found on pages 274 and 275 of The Planet Jupiter by B. M. Peek (Faber and Faber, 1958). tables may be found on pages 274 and 275 of *The Planet Jupiter* by B. M. Peek (Faber and Faber, 1958).



JUPITER—PHENOMENA OF THE BRIGHTEST SATELLITES 1976

Times and dates given are E.S.T. The phenomena are given for latitude 44° N., for Jupiter at least one hour above the horizon, and the sun at least one hour below the horizon, as seen from Central North America.

The symbols are as follows: E—eclipse, O—occultation, T—transit, S—shadow, D—disappearance, R—reappearance, I—ingress, e—egress. Satellites move from east to west across the face of the planet, and from west to east behind it. Before opposition, shadows fall to the west, and after opposition to the east. Thus eclipse phenomena occur on the west side until November 18, and on the east thereafter.







# JUPITER'S BELTS AND ZONES

Viewed through a telescope of 6-inch aperture or greater, Jupiter exhibits a variety of changing detail and colour in its cloudy atmosphere. Some features are of long duration, others are<br>short-lived. The short-lived. standard nomenclature of the belts and zones is given in the figure.



# **COMETS IN 1976**

## **B <sup>y</sup> B rian** G. **M arsden**



The following periodic comets are expected to be at perihelion during 1976:

Comet Westphal faded out on its way in to perihelion in 1913, and it is doubtful whether it can be observed any more. Comet Wolf was recovered in May 1975 but will remain very faint. Comet Gunn, discovered in 1970, has been followed all the way around its orbit. Comets Churyumov-Gerasimenko and Klemola have been observed at only one previous perihelion passage, and thus the predictions, particularly in the case of Comet Klemola, are more uncertain than for the other comets listed here. Comet Harrington-Abell, which passed only 0.04 A.U. from Jupiter in 1974, will be faint. Comets Tempel-Swift and Neujmin 2 have been missing since 1908 and 1927, respectively, and it is extremely improbable that they will be observed in 1976.

Comet d'Arrest is making its most favourable return since its discovery in 1851 and will pass only 0.15 A.U. from the earth in August 1976. A brief ephemeris is:



Comets Schaumasse and Pons-Winnecke are badly placed for observation and it is doubtful that the former will be detectable, even with very large telescopes.

Any bright comets, other than d'Arrest, that may appear during 1976 will be completely unexpected.

# **METEORS, FIREBALLS AND METEORITES**

### **B <sup>y</sup> Peter** M. **M illman**

Meteoroids are small solid particles moving in orbits about the sun. On entering the earth's atmosphere at velocities ranging from 15 to 75 kilometres per second they become luminous and appear as meteors or fireballs and in rare cases, if large enough to avoid complete vaporization, they may fall to the earth as meteorites.

Meteors are visible on any night of the year. At certain times of the year the earth encounters large numbers of meteors all moving together along the same orbit. Such a group is known as a meteor shower and the accompanying list gives the more important showers visible in 1976.

An observer located away from city lights and with perfect sky conditions will see an overall average of 7 sporadic meteors per hour apart from the shower meteors. These have been included in the hourly rates listed in the table. Slight haze or nearby lighting will greatly reduce the number of meteors seen. More meteors appear in the early morning hours than in the evening, and more during the last half of the year than during the first half.

The radiant is the position among the stars from which the meteors of a given shower seem to radiate. The appearance of any very bright fireball should be reported immediately to the nearest astronomical group or other organization concerned with the collection of such information. Where no local organization exists, reports should be sent to Meteor Centre, National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0R8. Free fireball report forms and instructions for their use, printed in either French or English, may be secured at the above address. If sounds are heard accompanying a bright fireball there is a possibility that a meteorite may have fallen. Astronomers must rely on observations made by the general public to track down such an object.



**M eteor Show ers for 1976**

# **CANADIAN METEORITE IMPACT SITES**

### **B <sup>y</sup>** P. **Blyth R obertson**

The search for ancient terrestrial meteorite craters, and investigations in the related fields of shock metamorphism and cratering mechanics, have been carried out since 1951 at the Earth Physics Branch (formerly Dominion Observatory) Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Approximately 40 percent of the craters recognized in the world have been discovered in Canada. At large impact sites (greater than approximately 1500 m diameter) original meteoritic material is not recognizable. Extreme shock pressures and temperatures at impact vapourize or melt the meteorite and it becomes intimately mixed and disseminated in the melted target rocks. Hypervelocity impact craters are therefore identified by the presence of shock metamorphic effects, the characteristic suite of deformation in the target rocks produced by shock pressures exceeding approximately 75 kilobars. The twenty-three "confirmed" structures in the Table contain definitive evidence of shock metamorphism, and are listed in order of their discovery. The latter three of these features were recognized during 1974. The "possible" sites represent only a few of those under consideration but where definitive shock metamorphic effects have not been found. Craters where data have been obtained through diamond-drilling or geophysical surveys are marked "D " and "G", respectively, and "A" signifies those sites accessible by road. "Float" includes boulders and pebbles in glacial deposits.



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#### SATURN AND ITS SATELLITES

### **by Terence D ickinson**

*Saturn*, with its system of rings, is a unique sight through a telescope. There are three rings. The outer ring A has an outer diameter 169,000 miles. It is separated from the middle ring B by Cassini's gap, which has an outer diameter 149,000 miles, and an inner diameter 145,000 miles. The inner ring C, also known as the dusky or crape ring, has an outer diameter 112,000 miles and an inner diameter 93,000 miles. Evidence for a fourth, innermost ring has been found; this ring is very faint.

Saturn exhibits a system of belts and zones with names and appearances similar to those of Jupiter (see diagram pg. 79).

*Titan*, the largest and brightest of Saturn's moons is seen easily in a 2-inch or larger telescope. At elongation Titan appears about 5 ring-diameters from Saturn. The satellite orbits Saturn in about 16 days and at magnitude 8.4\* dominates the field around the ringed planet.

*Rhea* is considerably fainter than Titan at magnitude 9.8 and a good quality 3-inch telescope may be required to detect it. At elongation Rhea is about 2 ring-diameters from the centre of Saturn.

*lapetus* is unique among the satellites of the solar system in that it is five times brighter at western elongation (mag. 10.1) than at eastern elongation (mag. 11.9). When brightest, lapetus is located about 12 ring-diameters west of its parent planet.

Of the remaining moons only Dione and Tethys are seen in "amateur"-sized telescopes.

\*Magnitudes given are at mean opposition.

### ELONGATIONS OF SATURN'S SATELLITES, 1976 (E.S.T.)



If Declination is positive, use inner R.A. scale; if declination is negative, use outer R.A. scale, and reverse the sign of the precession in declination<br>If Declination is positive, use inner R.A. scale; if declination is **If Declination is positive, use inner R.A. scale; if declination is** *negative,* **use** *outer* **R.A. scale, and** *reverse the sign of the precession in declination* TABLE OF PRECESSION FOR 50 YEARS



# FINDING LIST OF NAMED STARS



Pronunciations are generally as given by G. A. Davis, *Popular Astronomy*, 52, 8 (1944). Key to pronunciation on p. 5.

### **THE BRIGHTEST STARS**

### **by D onald** A. **M acR ae**

#### The 286 stars brighter than apparent magnitude 3.55.

*Star.* If the star is a visual double the letter *A* indicates that the data are for the brighter component. The brightness and separation of the second component *B* are given in the last column. Sometimes the double is too close to be conveniently resolved and the data refer to the combined light, *AB;* in interpreting such data the magnitudes of the two components must be considered.

*Visual Magnitude* (*V).* These magnitudes are based on *photoelectric observations,* with a few exceptions, which have been adjusted to match the yellow coloursensitivity of the eye. The photometric system is that of Johnson and Morgan in *Ap. J.*, vol. 117, p. 313, 1953. It is as likely as not that the true magnitude is within 0.03 mag. of the quoted figure, on the average. Variable stars are indicated with a 'v". The type of variability, range, *R*, in magnitudes, and period in days are given.

*Colour index*  $(B - V)$ *.* The blue magnitude, *B*, is the brightness of a star as observed photoelectrically through a blue filter. The difference  $B-V$  is therefore a measure of the colour of a star. The table reveals a close relation between  $B-V$  and spectral type. Some of the stars are slightly reddened by interstellar dust. The probable error of a value of  $B - V$  is only 0.01 or 0.02 mag.

*Type.* The customary spectral (temperature) classification is given first. The Roman numerals are indicators of *luminosity class.* They are to be interpreted as follows: la—most luminous supergiants; lb—less luminous supergiants; II—bright giants; III—normal giants; IV—subgiants; V—main sequence stars. Intermediate classes are sometimes used, e.g. lab. Approximate absolute magnitudes can be assigned to the various spectral and luminosity class combinations. Other symbols used in this column are: p—a peculiarity; e—emission lines; v—the spectrum is variable; m—lines due to metallic elements are abnormally strong; f—the O-type spectrum has several broad emission lines; n or nn—unusually wide or diffuse lines. A composite spectrum, e.g. M1 Ib + B, shows up when a star is composed of two nearly equal but unresolved components. The table now includes accurate spectral and luminosity classes for most stars in the southern sky. These were provided by Dr. Robert Garrison of the Dunlap Observatory. A few types in italics and parentheses remain poorly defined. Types in parentheses are less accurately defined (g—giant, d—dwarf, c—exceptionally high luminosity). All other types were very kindly provided especially for this table by Dr. W. W. Morgan, Yerkes Observatory.

Parallax (π). From "General Catalogue of Trigonometric Stellar Parallaxes" by Louise F. Jenkins, Yale Univ. Obs., 1952.

*Absolute visual magnitude*  $(M_v)$ , and *distance in light-years* (D). If  $\pi$  is greater than 0.030" the distance corresponds to this trigonometric parallax and the absolute magnitude was computed from the formula  $\tilde{M}_V = V + 5 + 5 \log \pi$ . Otherwise a generally more accurate absolute magnitude was obtained from the luminosity class. In this case the formula was used to *compute*  $\pi$  and the distance corresponds to this " spectroscopic" parallax. The formula is an expression of the inverse square law for decrease in light intensity with increasing distance. The effect of absorption of light by interstellar dust was neglected, except for three stars,  $\zeta$  Per,  $\sigma$  Sco and  $\zeta$  Oph, which are significantly reddened and would therefore be about a magnitude brighter if they were in the clear.

*Annual proper motion* (u), and *radial velocity* (R). From "General Catalogue of Stellar Radial Velocities" by R. E. Wilson, Carnegie Inst. Pub. 601, 1953. The information on radial velocities was brought up-to-date in 1975 by Dr. C. T. Bolton of the Dunlap Observatory. Italics indicate an average value of a variable radial velocity.

*The star names* are given for all the officially designated navigation stars and a few others. Throughout the table, a *colon* (:) indicates an uncertainty.





 $\bar{\gamma}$ 

















# **DOUBLE AND MULTIPLE STARS**

## **By Charles E. W orley**

Many stars can be separated into two or more components by use of a telescope. The larger the aperture of the telescope, the closer the stars which can be separated under good seeing conditions. With telescopes of moderate size and average optical quality, and for stars which are not unduly faint or of large magnitude difference, the minimum angular separation is given by 4.6/D, where D is the diameter of the telescope's objective in inches.

The following lists contain some interesting examples of double stars. The first list presents pairs whose orbital motions are very slow. Consequently, their angular separations remain relatively fixed and these pairs are suitable for testing the performance of small telescopes. In the second list are pairs of more general interest, including a number of binaries of short period for which the position angles and separations are changing rapidly.

In both lists the columns give, successively: the star designation in two forms; its right ascension and declination for 1975; the combined visual magnitude of the pair and the individual magnitudes; the apparent separation and position angle for 1976.0; and the period, if known.

Many of the components are themselves very close visual or spectroscopic binaries. (Other double stars appear in the table of The Brightest Stars and of The Nearest Stars.)



**\*There is a marked colour difference between the components.**

**†The separation of the two pairs of e Lyr is 208".**

*(Editor's Note* **The co-ordinates of the stars in this table, which was extensively revised in 1975, are referred to the equinox of 1975, rather than to that of 1980, which is used elsewhere in this book.)**

# **VARIABLE STARS**

### **By Jan et M attei**

The systematic observation of variable stars is an area in which an amateur can make a valuable contribution to astronomy. For beginning observers, maps of the fields of four bright variable stars are given below. In each case, the magnitudes (with decimal point omitted) of several suitable comparison stars are given. Using two comparison stars, one brighter, one fainter than the variable, estimate the brightness of the variable in terms of these two stars. Record also the date and time of observation. When a number of observations have been made, a graph of magnitude versus date may be plotted. The shape of this " light curve" depends on the type of variable. Further information about variable star observing may be obtained from the Ameri-can Association of Variable Star Observers, 187 Concord Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

In the tables the first column, the Harvard designation of the star, gives the 1900 position: the first four figures give the hours and minutes of R.A., the last two figures give the Dec. in degrees, italicised for southern declinations. The column headed *Max.* gives the mean maximum magnitude. The *Period* is in days. The *Epoch* gives the predicted date of the *earliest* maximum occurring this year; by adding the period to this epoch other dates of maximum may be found. The list of long-period variables has been prepared by the American Association of Variable Star Observers and includes the variables with maxima brighter than mag. 8.0, and north of Dec. — 20°. These variables may reach maximum two or three weeks before or after the listed epoch and may remain at maximum for several weeks. The second table contains stars which are representative of other types of variable. The data are taken from "The General Catalogue of Variable Stars" by Kukarkin and Parenago and for eclipsing binaries from *Rocznik Astronomiczny Obserwatorium Krakowskiego*, 1975, International Supplement.



# LONG-PERIOD VARIABLE STARS



# OTHER TYPES OF VARIABLE STARS



**\*Minimum.**

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF VARIABLE TYPES

Variables can be divided into three main classes; pulsating, eruptive and eclipsing binary stars as recommended by Commission 27 of the International Astronomical Union at its 12th General Assembly in Hamburg in 1964. A very brief and general description about the major types of variables in each class is given below.

#### I. *Pulsating Variables*

*Cepheids:* Variables that pulsate periodically with periods 1 to 70 days. They have high luminosity with amplitudes of light variations ranging from 0.1 to  $2^m$ . Some of the group are located in open clusters, and they obey the well known period-luminosity relation. They are of  $\vec{F}$  spectral class at maximum and G-K at minimum. The later their spectral class the greater is the period of light variation. Typical representative: δ Cephei.

*RR Lyrae Type:* Pulsating, giant variables with periods ranging from 0.05 to 1.42 and amplitude of light variation between 1 and  $2<sup>m</sup>$ . They are usually of A spectral class. Typical representative: RR Lyrae.

*R V Tauri Type:* Supergiant variables with light curves of alternating deep and shallow minima. The periods, defined as the interval between two deep minima, range from 30 to 150 days. The amplitude of light variations goes up to  $3<sup>m</sup>$ . Many show long term variations of 500 to 9000 days in their mean magnitude. Generally the spectral classes range from G to K. Typical representative: R Scuti.

*Long period—Mira Ceti variables:* Giant variables that vary with amplitudes from 2.5 to  $5<sup>m</sup>$  and larger with well defined periodicity, ranging from 80 to 1000 days. They show characteristic emission spectra of late spectral classes of Me, Ce and Se. Typical representative: o Ceti (Mira).

*Semiregular Variables:* Giants and supergiants showing appreciable periodicity accompanied by intervals of irregularities of light variation. The periods range from 30 to 1000 days with amplitudes not exceeding 1 to  $2<sup>m</sup>$ , in general. Typical representative: R Ursae Minoris.

*Irregular Variables:* Stars that show no periodicity or only a trace of it at times. Typical representative: ω Canis Majoris.

#### II. *Eruptive Variables*

*Novae:* Hot, dwarf stars with sudden increase in brightness, from 7 to 16<sup>m</sup> in amplitude, in a matter of 1 to several to hundreds of days. After the outburst the brightness decreases slowly until its initial brightness is reached in several years or decades. Near the maximum brightness, spectra similar to A or F giants are usually observed. Typical representative: CP Puppis (Nova 1942).

*Supernovae:* Novae in a much larger scale, with sudden increase in brightness up to  $20<sup>th</sup>$  or more. The general appearance of their light curve is similar to novae. Typical representative: CM Tauri (central star of the Crab Nebula).

*R Coronae Borealis Type:* High luminosity variables with slow, non-periodic drops in brightness of amplitudes from about 1 to  $9<sup>m</sup>$ . The duration of minima varies from some dozen to several hundreds of days. Members of this type are of F to K and R spectral class. Typical representative: R Coronae Borealis.

*U Geminorum Type:* Dwarf novae that have long intervals of apparent quiesence at minimum with sudden rises to maximum. The range of outburst is from 2 to  $6<sup>m</sup>$  in light variations and ten to thousands of days between outbursts depending upon the star. It is a well established fact that most of the members are spectroscopic binaries with periods in order of hours. Typical representative: SS Cygni.

*Z Camelopardalis Type:* Variables similar to U Gem stars in their physical and spectroscopic properties. They show cyclical variations with intervals of constant brightness for several cycles, approximately one third of the way from maximum to minimum. Typical representative: Z Camelopardalis.

#### III. *Eclipsing Binaries*

Binary systems of stars with the orbital plane lying close to the line of sight of the observer. The components periodically eclipse each other, causing variations in the apparent brightness of the system, as is seen and recorded by the observer. The period of the eclipses coincides with the period of the orbital motion of the components. Typical representative:  $\beta$  Persei (Algol).

*Editor's Note:* In cooperation with the A.A.V.S.O., we plan to introduce one or two new variables to our readers each year. The following finding chart and light curve are for R CrB. Normally, it is  $6\degree 0$ , but suddenly and unpredictably it may fade as much as 10 magnitudes, then slowly return to normal. It is an easy variable star to observe with binoculars.



# **THE NEAREST STARS**

#### **B y A lan H . B atten**

The accompanying table is similar to one that has been published in the **handbook** for several years. Like its predecessors, it is based on the work of Professor van de Kamp who has studied many of the nearest stars and published a revised list of them in 1969 in the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific*. Since that list was published, four new stars have been found to have parallaxes of about 0.  $\frac{100}{190}$ or greater and are therefore within the distance limit of about seventeen light years (or just over five parsecs) which has been arbitrarily set as the limit for this table. One of them, G158-27, has been included in the **handbook** since 1972; the other three, L725-32, B.D.  $-15^{\circ}$  6290, and B.D. 44 $^{\circ}$  2051, appear for the first time in the 1976 **HANDBOOK**. New determinations of the parallaxes of some of the stars in this list have also been published in the last few years. They have not been used because van de Kamp's discussion made use of all the data available for each star, and the inclusion of new data from single observatories for just a few stars would destroy the homogeneity of his list. The reader should remember, however, that new results may affect the order of stars in the list, and that the parallaxes of the new stars included will be relatively uncertain until more observations are available. The latest determination of the parallax of Stein 2051A and B is  $0$ . 179 and if this value is confirmed the stars should be dropped from the list.

Measuring the distances of stars is one of the most difficult and important jobs of an observational astronomer. As the earth travels around the sun each year, the directions of the nearer stars seem to change very slightly compared with those of more distant background stars. This change is called *annual parallax*; even for the nearest star it is less than one second of arc—the angle subtended by a penny about 2.5 miles away. That explains the difficulty of the task, and why results from different observatories are often slightly different. Parallax measurements are important because all our knowledge of the luminosities of stars, and hence of the structures of both the stars and the Galaxy, depends on the relatively few stellar distances that can be directly and accurately measured. The distances are so vast that new units are needed to describe them. Often we talk of *light-years*—the distance (nearly ten million million km or six million million miles) that light travels in a year—but in their own calculations astronomers use *parsecs.* One parsec is the distance of a star that has an annual parallax of one second of arc, and is equal to about 3.26 light years. The distance in parsecs is the reciprocal of the parallax expressed (as in the table) in seconds of arc.

The table gives the name and position of each star, the annual parallax  $\pi$ , the distance D in light-years, the spectral type, the proper motion  $\mu$  in seconds of arc per year (that is the apparent motion of the star across the sky each year—nearby stars usually have large proper motions), the total space velocity W in km/sec (if known), the visual apparent magnitude and the luminosity in visible light in terms of that of the sun. In column 6, *wd* stands for white dwarf, and *e* indicates the presence of emission lines in the spectrum. Very few stars in our neighbourhood are brighter than the sun, and there are no very luminous or very hot stars at all. Most stars in this part of the galaxy are small, cool, and insignificant objects; we shall probably never be sure we have found them all.

The newest list contains 63 stars, including the Sun, thirty-one of which are single. There are eleven double-star systems and two triple systems. Earlier lists have emphasized the unseen companions believed to be associated with seven of the stars or systems. Recent work has called the reality of some of these into question—especially that of the supposed planetary companion of Barnard's star. The suspected companions are still indicated by asterisks in the table, but the evidence for several of them is no longer as clear as it appeared to be some years ago.

### **THE NEAREST STARS**



**\*Star may have an unseen component.**

# **GALACTIC NEBULAE**

### **B y R ene R acine**

The following objects were selected from the brightest and largest of the various classes to illustrate the different types of interactions between stars and interstellar matter in our galaxy. *Emission regions* (HII) are excited by the strong ultraviolet flux of young, hot stars and are characterized by the lines of hydrogen in their spectra. *Reflection nebulae* (Ref) result from the diffusion of starlight by clouds of interstellar dust. At certain stages of their evolution stars become unstable and explode, shedding their outer layers into what becomes a *planetary nebula* (PI) or a *supernova remnant* (SN). Protostellar nebulae (PrS) are objects still poorly understood; they are somewhat similar to the reflection nebulae, but their associated stars, often variable, are very luminous infrared stars which may be in the earliest stages of stellar evolution. Also included in the selection are four *extended complexes* (Compl) of special interest for their rich population of dark and bright nebulosities of various types. In the table S is the optical surface brightness in magnitude per square second of arc of representative regions of the nebula, and m\* is the magnitude of the associated star.



## MESSIER'S CATALOGUE OF DIFFUSE OBJECTS

This table lists the 103 objects in Messier's original catalogue. The columns con-tain: Messier's number (M), the number in Dreyer's New General Catalogue (NGC), the constellation, the 1970 position, the integrated visual magnitude  $(m_v)$ , and the class of object. OC means open cluster, GC, globular cluster, PN, planetary nebula, DN, diffuse nebula, and G, galaxy. The type of galaxy is also indicated, as explained in the table of external galaxies. An asterisk indicates that additional information about the object may be found elsewhere in the *Handbook*, in the appropriate table.



### **STAR CLUSTERS**

#### **B y T . Schm idt-K aler**

The star clusters for this list have been selected to include those most conspicuous. Two types of clusters can be recognized: open (or galactic), and globular. Globulars appear as highly symmetrical agglomerations of very large numbers of stars, distributed throughout the galactic halo but concentrated toward the centre of the Galaxy. Their colour-magnitude diagrams are typical for the old stellar population II. Open clusters appear usually as irregular aggregates of stars, sometimes barely distinguished from random fluctuations of the general field. They are concentrated to the galactic disk, with colour-magnitude diagrams typical for the stellar population I of the normal stars of the solar neighbourhood.

The first table includes all well-defined open clusters with diameters greater than 40' or integrated magnitudes brighter than 5.0, as well as the richest clusters and some of special interest. *NGC* indicates the serial number of the cluster in Dreyer's *New General Catalogue of Clusters and Nebulae, M, its number in Messier's catalogue,* and  $\delta$  denote right ascension and declination,  $P$ , the apparent integrated photographic magnitude according to Collinder (1931), *D,* the apparent diameter in minutes of arc according to Trumpler (1930) when possible, in one case from-Collinder; *m*, the photographic magnitude of the fifth-brightest star according to Shapley (1933) when possible or from new data, in italics; *r*, the distance of the cluster in kpcs (1 kpc = 3263 light-years), usually as given by Becker and Fenkart (1971); Sp, the earliest spectral type of cluster stars as a mean determined from three colour photometry and directly from the stellar spectra. The spectral type indicates the age of the cluster, expressed in millions of years, thus:  $O5 = 2$ ,  $BO = 8$ ,  $B5 = 70$ ,  $A0 = 400$ ,  $A5 = 1000$ ,  $F0 = 3000$  and  $F5 = 10000$ .

The second table includes all globular clusters with a total apparent photographic magnitude brighter than 7.6. The first three columns are as in the first table, followed by *B,* the total photographic magnitude; *D,* the apparent diameter in minutes of arc containing 90 per cent of the stars, and in italics, total diameters from miscellaneous sources; *Sp,* the integrated spectral type; *m,* the mean blue magnitude of the 25 brightest stars (excluding the five brightest); *N,* the number of known variables; *r,* the distance in kpcs (absolute magnitude of RR Lyrae variables taken as  $M_B =$  $+0.5$ ; *V*, the radial velocity in km/sec. The data are taken from a compilation by Arp (1965); in case no data were available there, various other sources have been used, especially H. S. Hogg's Bibliography (1963).

	$\alpha$ 1980 $\delta$									
<b>NGC</b>	h	m	$\circ$	,	P	D	m	$\mathbf{r}$	Sp	Remarks
188 752 869 884 Perseus Pleiades 03 Hyades 1912 1976/80 05 2099 2168 2232 2244 2264 2287 2362	00 01 02 02 103 104 105 06 06 06 106 107	42.0 56.6 17.6 21.0 21 45.9 19 27.3 34.4 105 51.1 106 07.6 25.5 31.3 39.9 46.2 18.0	$+85$ 14 $+37,35$ $+57$ $+57$ $+48$ $+24.04$ $+15$ $+35$ $-05$ $+3232$ $+24,21$ $-04$ $+04$ $+09$ $-20$ $-24$	04 02 32 35 49 24 44 53 54 43 54	9.3 6.6 4.3 4.4 2.3 240 1.61 0.8 400 7.0 2.5 6.2 5.6 4.1 5.2 4.1 5.0 3.8	14 45 30 30 120 18 50 24 29 20 27 30 32 7	14.6 9.6 9.5 9.5 5 4.2 1.5 9.7 5.5 9.7 9.0 7 8.0 8.0 8.8 9.4	1.55 0.38 2.15 2.48 0.17 0.125 0.040 1.41 0.41 1.28 0.87 0.49 1.62 0.72 0.66 1.64	F2 A5 B1 B0 B1 <b>B6</b> A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>5</sub> O <sub>5</sub> <b>B8</b> B5 B <sub>3</sub> O5 O <sub>8</sub> <b>B4</b> O <sub>9</sub>	oldest known h Per $\gamma$ Per, M supergiants moving cl., $\alpha$ Per M45, best known moving cl. in Tau* Trapezium, very young M37 M35 Rosette, very young S Mon M41 τ CMa
2422	07	34.7	$-14$	27	4.3	30	9.8	0.48	B <sub>3</sub>	

**Open Clusters**

**\*Basic for distance determination.**


 $7078$  | 15 | 21 29.1 | + 12 05 | 6.96 | 9.4 | F2 | 14.44 | 103 | 10.5 | - 107

### **EXTERNAL GALAXIES**

#### BY S. VAN DEN BERGH

Among the hundreds of thousands of systems far beyond our own Galaxy relatively few are readily seen in small telescopes. The first list contains the brightest galaxies. For the Featury seen in sinal tenscopes. The first inst contains the bigginess.<br>The first four columns give the catalogue numbers and position. In the column Type,<br>E indicates elliptical, I, irregular, and Sa, Sb, Sc, spi

The second list contains the nearest galaxies and includes the photographic<br>distance modulus  $(m - M)_{pq}$ , and the absolute photographic magnitude,  $M_{pq}$ .

NGC or		$\alpha$ 1980 $\delta$				Dimen- sions	Distance millions
name	М	h m	$\circ$ $\lambda$	Type	$m_{pq}$		of $1.y.$
55 205 221 224 247	32 31	00 14.0 00 39.2 00 41.6 00 41.6 00 46.1	$-39$ 20 $+41$ 35 $+40$ 46 $+41$ 10 $-20,51$	Sc or Ir E6 <sub>p</sub> E2 Sb I-II S IV	7.9 8.89 9.06 4.33 9.47	$30 \times 5$ $12 \times 6$ $3.4 \times 2.9$ $163 \times 42$ $21 \times 8.4$	7.5 2.1 2.1 2.1 7.5
253 <b>SMC</b> 300 598 Fornax	33	00 46.6 00 52.0 00 54.0 01 32.8 02 38.7	$-25, 24$ $-72$ 56 $-37$ 48 $+30.33$ $-34, 36$	Sep Ir IV or IV-V Sc III–IV Sc II-III dE	7.0: 2.86 8.66 6.19 9.1:	$22 \times 4.6$ $216 \times 216$ $22 \times 16.5$ $61 \times 42$ $50 \times 35$	7.5 0.2 7.5 2.4 0.4
<b>LMC</b> 2403 2903 3031 3034	81 82	05 23.7 07 34.9 09 31.0 09 53.9 09 54.4	$-69, 46$ $+65$ 39 $+21$ 36 $+69.09$ $+69$ 47	Ir or Sc III-IV Sc III $Sb$ I-II $Sb$ I-II Scp:	0.86 8.80 9.48 7.85 9.20	$432 \times 432$ $22 \times 12$ $16 \times 6.8$ $25 \times 12$ $10 \times 1.5$	0.2 6.5 19.0 6.5 6.5
4258 4472 4594 4736 4826	49 104 94 64	12 18.0 12 28.8 12 38.8 12 50.0 12 55.8	$+47$ 25 $+0806$ $-11$ 31 $+41$ 13 $+21$ 48	Sbp E4 Sb Sbp II:	8.90 9.33 9.18 8.91 9.27	$19 \times 7$ $9.8 \times 6.6$ $7.9 \times 4.7$ $13 \times 12$ $10 \times 3.8$	14.0 37.0 37.0 14.0 12.0:
4945 5055 5128 5194 5236	63 51 83	13 04.1 13 14.8 13 24.2 29.0 13 36.0 13	$-49.22$ $+42$ 08 $-42$ 54 $+47$ 18 $-29.46$	Sb III Sb II E <sub>0</sub> p Sc I $Sc$ I-II	8.0 9.26 7.87 8.88 7.0:	$20 \times 4$ $8.0 \times 3.0$ $23 \times 20$ $11 \times 6.5$ $13 \times 12$	14.0 14.0 8.0:
5457 6822	101	14 02.4 19 43.8	$+54.26$ $-14.49$	Sc I Ir $IV-V$	8.20 9.21	$23 \times 21$ $20 \times 10$	14.0 1.7

THE BRIGHTEST GALAXIES

		$\alpha$ 1980 $\delta$						Dist.		
Name	<b>NGC</b>	h	m	$\circ$	$\lambda$	$m_{pa}$	$(m-M)_{pg}$	$M_{pg}$	Type	thous. of l.y.
M31	224		00 41.6	$+41$ 10		4.33	24.65	$-20.3$	Sb I–II	2,100
Galaxy								?	Sb or Sc	
M33	598		01 32.8	$+3033$		6.19	24.70	$-18.5$	Sc II–III	2,400
<b>LMC</b>		05	23.7	- 69	46	0.86	18.65	$-17.8$	Ir or SBc $III$ -IV	160
<b>SMC</b>			00 52.0	$-72, 56$		2.86	19.05	$-16.2$	Ir IV or $IV-V$	190
<b>NGC</b>	205		00 39.2	$+41,35$		8.89	24.65	$-15.8$	E6p	2,100
M32	221	00	41.6	$+40.46$		9.06	24.65	$-15.6$	E2	2,100
<b>NGC</b>	6822	19	43.8	$-14.49$		9.21	24.55	$-15.3$	Ir IV-V	1,700
<b>NGC</b>	185	00 <sup>°</sup>	37.8	$+48$ 14		10.29	24.65	$-14.4$	E <sub>0</sub>	2,100
IC1613		01	04.0	$+02$	01	10.00	24.40	$-14.4$	IrV	2,400
NGC	147	00	32.0	$+48$	14	10.57	24.65	$-14.1$	dE4	2,100
Fornax		02	38.7	$-34$	36	9.1:	20.6:	$-12:$	dE	430
And I		00	44.4	$+37$	56	13.5:	24.65	$-11:$	dE	2,100
And II		01	15.3	$+33$	20	13.5:	24.65	$-11:$	dE	2,100
And III		00	34.3	$+36$	24	13.5:	24.65	$-11:$	dE	2,100
Leo I		10	07.4	$+12$ 24		11.27	21.8:	$-10:$	dE	750:
Sculptor			00 58.9	$-33$	49	10.5	19.70	$-9.2:$	dE	280:
Leo II		11	12.4	$+22$	16	12.85	21.8:	-9:	dE	750:
Draco		17	19.8	$+57,56$			19.50	?	dE	260
Ursa Minor			15 08.5	$+67$	11		19.40	$\boldsymbol{\mathcal{P}}$	dE	250

THE NEAREST GALAXIES

#### MAXIMA OF DELTA CEPHEI

A finding chart for this famous pulsating variable is given on p. 98. The magnitudes (minus decimal point) of non-variable comparison stars are marked; the magnitude of  $\delta$  Cep can be estimated relative to these. Observation of this star, or of Algol, is a good introduction to serious variable star observing, and is a good project for the amateur or student.

Times given are E.S.T., rounded off to the nearest 10 minutes, and are based on the ephemeris J.D. (max) =  $2436075.445 + 5.366341$  E.



#### **RADIO SOURCES**

#### **B y John G alt**

Although several thousand radio sources have been catalogued most of them are only observable with the largest radio telescopes. This list contains the few strong sources which could be detected with amateur radio telescopes as well as representa-tive examples of astronomical objects which emit radio waves.



\*Could be detected with amateur radio telescopes.



The above map represents the evening sky on the dates and times shown. For earlier (or later) dates, add (or subtract) two hours per month. For instance, the map represents the early morning sky in late October at 4 a.m. The map is drawn for latitude 45° N. but is useful for latitudes several degrees north or south of this.

The centre of the map is the *zenith*, the point directly overhead; the circumference of the map is the *horizon.* To identify the stars, hold the map in front of you so that the part of the horizon which you are facing (north, for instance) is downward.



The above map represents the evening sky on the dates and times shown. For earlier (or later) dates, add (or subtract) two hours per month. For instance, the map represents the early morning sky in late December at 4 a.m. The map is drawn for latitude 45° N, but is useful for latitudes several degrees north or south of this.

The centre of the map is the *zenith*, the point directly overhead; the circumference of the map is the *horizon.* To identify the stars, hold the map in front of you so that the part of the horizon which you are facing (north, for instance) is downward.



The above map represents the evening sky on the dates and times shown. For earlier (or later) dates, add (or subtract) two hours per month. For instance, the map represents the early morning sky in late February at 4 a.m. The map is drawn for latitude 45° N, but is useful for latitudes several degrees north or south of this.

The centre of the map is the *zenith*, the point directly overhead; the circumference of the map is the *horizon.* To identify the stars, hold the map in front of you so that the part of the horizon which you are facing (north, for instance) is downward.



The above map represents the evening sky on the dates and times shown. For earlier (or later) dates, add (or subtract) two hours per month. For instance, the map represents the early morning sky in late April at 4 a.m. The map is drawn for latitude 45° N, but is useful for latitudes several degrees north or south of this.

The centre of the map is the *zenith*, the point directly overhead; the circumference of the map is the *horizon.* To identify the stars, hold the map in front of you so that the part of the horizon which you are facing (north, for instance) is downward.



The above map represents the evening sky on the dates and times shown. For earlier (or later) dates, add (or subtract) two hours per month. For instance, the map represents the early morning sky in late June at 4 a.m. The map is drawn for latitude  $45^{\circ}$  N, but is useful for latitudes several degrees north or south of this.

The centre of the map is the *zenith*, the point directly overhead; the circumference of the map is the *horizon.* To identify the stars, hold the map in front of you so that the part of the horizon which you are facing (north, for instance) is downward.



The above map represents the evening sky on the dates and times shown. For earlier (or later) dates, add (or subtract) two hours per month. For instance, the map represents the early morning sky in late August at 4 a.m. The map is drawn for latitude 45° N, but is useful for latitudes several degrees north or south of this.

The centre of the map is the *zenith*, the point directly overhead; the circumference of the map is the *horizon.* To identify the stars, hold the map in front of you so that the part of the horizon which you are facing (north, for instance) is downward.

## CALENDAR 1976



# CALENDAR 1977



