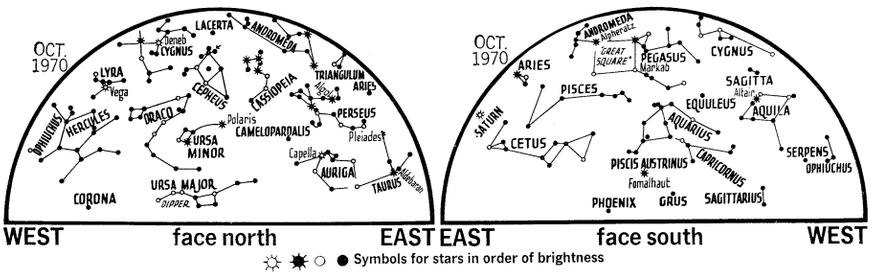
Saturn in the east

by James Stokley



October is the first full month of autumn, with only one planet remaining easily visible in the evening sky. This is Saturn, which rises in the east in early October about two hours after sunset—about 9 p.m. local daylight saving time. At the end of the month it will rise less than one hour after sunset. Saturn will exceed most of the stars in brilliance later in the night. It is in the constellation of Aries.

The accompanying maps depict the sky as it looks about 11 p.m. daylight savings time on Oct. 1; an hour earlier at the middle and two hours earlier as the month comes to a close.

Vega, the brightest star seen on October evenings, is high in the west in Lyra. It is only about 10 percent fainter than Saturn, but its scintillating light, characteristic of a star, is quite different from the steady glow of a planet.

Cygnus, with its bright star Deneb, is above Vega. To the right is Altair in Aquila (shown on the southern sky map).

Low in the northeast is Auriga with the bright star, Capella. Capella is actually only about 10 percent fainter than Vega. However, it is dimmed even more because of it's low position. This is true of Aldebaran in Taurus.

Low in the south stands Fomalhaut in Piscis Austrinus. It is about as high as we can see it from our northern latitude. At Porto Allegre, Brazil, at 30 degrees south, it passes overhead and appears much brighter than it does to us.

The Big Dipper, part of Ursa Major, is low in the north, in its poorest evening position of the year. Above it is Ursa Minor, with Polaris, the pole-star. □

CELESTIAL TIMETABLE

Oct.	EDT	
2	12:40 a.m.	Algol at minimum brightness
3	10:00 p.m.	Moon passes north of Venus
8	12:43 a.m.	Moon in first quarter
12	9:00 p.m.	Moon nearest, distance 224,700 miles
14	4:21 p.m.	Full moon ("Hunter's moon")
16	10:00 p.m.	Moon passes north of Saturn
21	10:47 p.m.	Moon in last quarter
24	6:00 p.m.	Moon farthest, distance 251,600 miles
	EST	
27	5:00 a.m.	Mercury behind sun
	3:00 p.m.	Moon passes south of Mars
30	1:28 a.m.	New moon