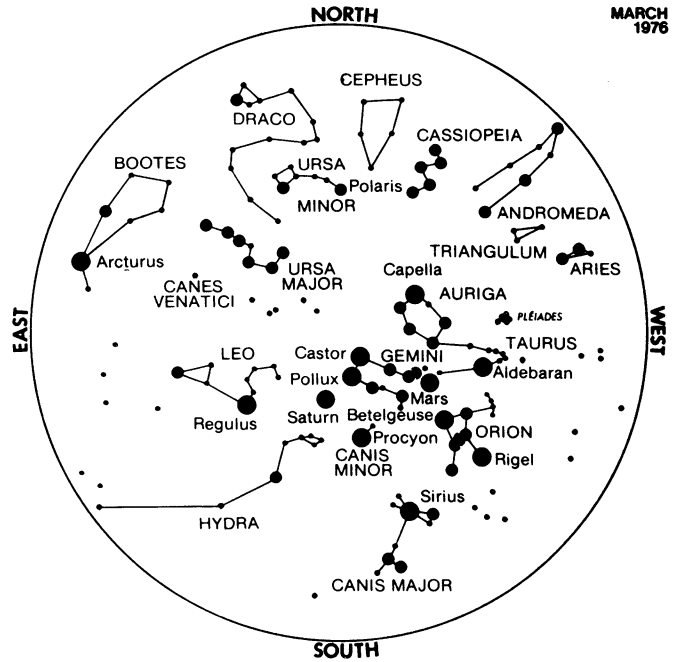


STARS OF MARCH

MARCH
1976

CELESTIAL TIME TABLE

March	3	midnight	Moon farthest from earth, distance 252,300 miles
	4	3:00 am	Moon passes north of Jupiter
	8	11:38 pm	Moon in first quarter
		2:00 pm	Moon passes south of Mars
	11	10:00 pm	Moon passes south of Saturn
	13	10:20 pm	Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum brightness
	15	9:53 pm	Full moon
	16	2:00 pm	Moon nearest, distance 222,200 miles
		7:10 pm	Algol at minimum
	20	6:50 am	Sun over equator, spring begins in Northern Hemisphere
	22	1:54 pm	Moon in last quarter
	30	12:08 pm	New moon
	31	5:00 am	Moon farthest, distance 252,600 miles



BY JAMES STOKELY

Of the three bright planets that shine in the March evening sky, Jupiter is the most brilliant. At the first of the month it sets about 9 p.m. local standard time. Earlier in the evening it will be in the west in the constellation Pisces. By the end of March, after it has moved into the next-door group of Aries, it will set about two hours earlier—just about the time the sky becomes dark after twilight has ended.

Second brightest is Saturn, overhead at the boundary between Gemini and Cancer. Almost in line with Castor and Pollux, the two brightest stars in Gemini, it is farther south and considerably brighter than either. It sets in the early morning.

Mars is farther west and just above the

stars of Taurus. It's the faintest of the three, although still ranking as first magnitude. Saturn is about 1¾ times as bright as Mars, while Jupiter is more than five times as bright as Saturn.

Of the evening stars the brightest is Sirius, to the southwest in Canis Major, a little fainter than Jupiter. It shines, however, with the scintillating brilliance of a star rather than the steady glow of a bright planet.

To the right of this group is familiar Orion, which has two first-magnitude stars. Rigel, which is brighter, is nearer the horizon; Betelgeuse stands above it. Between them is the row of three fainter stars forming Orion's belt. Farther to the right and about as high as Orion you'll

see Taurus with Aldebaran, the brightest star.

Sunrise is considered the time when the sun's upper edge, not its center, first appears above the horizon. Similarly, sunset is the last appearance in the west of the upper edge. In addition, refraction in our atmosphere bends the sun's rays around the curve of the earth and makes the sun appear a little higher than it really is. Actually, we can see the entire disk of the sun when it is really completely below the horizon.

If there were no atmosphere to cause such refraction, and if we used the center of the sun to mark sunrise and sunset, day and night would be the same length at the equinoxes in March and September. □

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