



Scorpius shines in the south

by James Stokley

Two bright planets make the evening skies of July even more brilliant than usual. Six first magnitude stars shine in the July sky.

The planet Mars now stands in the south, considerably brighter than a first magnitude star. Its brilliance as well as its redness makes it easy to identify. However, it is fading rapidly as it draws away from the close approach (45 million miles) it made to earth on June 9. On July 1 its distance is about 48 million miles; this increases to 59 million on the 31st. It will be only about half as bright at the end of the month as it was on the first.

Mars sets in the west after midnight. Low in the southwest is Jupiter, which sets about midnight early in the month.

After about July 10, Jupiter will actually be brighter than Mars, although both will be dimmed by their low altitude; increased absorption of their light by the earth's atmosphere causes them to appear a little fainter.

These planets, as well as the July evening stars, are shown on the accompanying maps. The sky looks like this about 11:00 p.m., local daylight saving time, on July 1, an hour earlier on the 15th and two hours earlier on the 31st.

High in the northeast is the brightest star now visible: Vega in Lyra. Below stands Cygnus where we find Deneb. And to the right, in Aquila, is Altair. Vega, Deneb and Altair form the familiar summer triangle.

Second brightest star, only slightly fainter than Vega, is Arcturus in Bootes.

Scorpius has the bright star, Antares. The name Antares, which means rival of Mars, was applied because both are red. The star is about a tenth as bright as the planet.

To the southwest where Jupiter shines, is Virgo with bright Spica.

On the first few days of July the moon, just past the full phase, will rise before the end of twilight and so pro-

vide moonlit evenings. By July 7 the moon will not rise until early morning. But on the 23rd, when it reaches first quarter, it will remain visible until about midnight. Full on the 28th, it will shine brightly in the evening for the rest of July. ◇



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CELESTIAL TIMETABLE		
July	EDT	
5		Earth farthest from sun, distance 94,510,000 miles
6	9:18 a.m.	Moon in last quarter
8	9:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Saturn
10	noon	Moon passes north of Venus
13	2:00 p.m.	Moon farthest, distance 252,600 miles
14	10:12 a.m.	New moon
20	4:00 a.m.	Moon passes south of Jupiter
22	8:10 a.m.	Moon in first quarter
	11:00 a.m.	Mercury behind sun
24	8:00 p.m.	Moon passes south of Mars
28	5:00 a.m.	Moon nearest, distance 222,400 miles
	10:46 p.m.	Full moon