

haps a comet." It never occurred to him that it might be a planet. But, as he and other astronomers continued to observe it and calculated its orbit they finally realized that it really was a new major member of the solar system.

Then came the question of a name for the planet. Herschel wished to honor the king, George III, who had given him a pension. So he proposed "Georgium Sidus," or "George's star." This name was used for a time in England, but continental astronomers had other ideas. Some wanted to name it "Herschel." But they finally accepted the suggestion of J. E. Bode, a German astronomer, that it be called Uranus. This was the name, according to mythology, of Saturn's father, so it fitted in with the other planets.

When the movements of Uranus through the sky had been determined, the astronomers figured backwards, to see where it had been previously. This showed that a number of observers had actually seen it before 1781, but had thought it to be a star. Thus, several astronomers could have won the fame that came to Herschel, if they had only checked their observations more carefully.

Celestial Time Table for April

APRIL EST	
2	Midnight Moon passes Mars
8	7:57 p.m. Full moon
9	10:00 p.m. Moon farthest, distance 252,500 miles
16	9:53 p.m. Moon in last quarter
18	6:00 p.m. Moon passes Saturn
21	4:00 a.m. Moon passes Venus
23	2:00 p.m. Moon nearest, distance 221,800 miles
	3:29 p.m. New moon
24	10:00 p.m. Moon passes Mercury
25	9:00 p.m. Mercury farthest east of sun
28	Noon Venus passes Jupiter
30	10:08 a.m. Moon in first quarter
	9:00 p.m. Moon passes Mars

Subtract one hour for CST, two hours for MST, and three hours for PST.

• Science News Letter, 83:186 March 23, 1963

ASTRONOMY

Bright Comet Now Visible After Sunset

➤ ONE OF THE brightest comets in several years can be seen very low in the western sky just after sunset.

However, the chances of spotting Comet Ikeya when the western horizon is clear are decreasing because it is not only fading in brightness but drawing closer to the sun.

The comet was discovered by Kaoru Ikeya, a Japanese amateur astronomer, for whom the comet is named.

In May, when Comet Ikeya will again be far enough from the sun to be visible, it will have faded to ninth magnitude and can then be spotted only with powerful binoculars or a telescope. The comet's brightness and path through the heavens were calculated at Harvard College Observatory in Cambridge, Mass.

• Science News Letter, 83:187 March 23, 1963

Although ciguatera poisoning resulting from eating the flesh of certain fishes is now a well-established fact, the source and nature of the toxin are still unknown.

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