SET YOUR WATCH BY THE DOG-STAR

Setting your watch from the stars is easy, if you can see Sirius, the Dog-Star, which shines brilliantly in the southwestern sky in early April evenings. Dr. Charles Clayton Wylie, assistant professor of astronomy at the University of Iowa, has developed a method of doing this.

The method is based on the fact that Sirius is in the part of the heavens directly opposite the sun on January first; that is, at midnight then, when the sun is above the part of the earth directly opposite the observer, the Dog-Star is directly south, or where the sun is at noon.

Most people can judge the approximate time of day if they see where the sun is, so that on January first it is a simple matter to tell the time from Sirius, because it will be the same as when the sun is in that position, except that the hour will be p.m. instead of a.m. or a.m. instead of p.m.

Since the sun makes a complete circuit of the heavens every year, and our ordinary time is measured from its position, "Sirius time" will be two hours slower than sun time for each month before New Year's Day, or two hours fast for each month after.

The rules for finding the local time from Sirius are summarized by Dr. Wylie as follows:

First: "Estimate the hour at which the sun is in the observed position of Sirius."

Second: "From this estimation subtract double the number of months after New Year's day, or add to it double the number of months before New Year's. The result is the local time. If the doubled number of months is larger than the estimated Sirius time, add 12 to the latter.

As an example take the evening of April 1. Sirius is shining brilliantly in the southwest, or about the position that the sun occupies at two o'clock. Three months have elapsed since New Year's day, so twice three or six is subtracted from fourteen (two o'clock plus twelve) and the answer is eight, and the time is eight p. m.

Dr. Wylie suggests that with a little practice the position of Sirius may be estimated to the nearest quarter hour, and as the months may be taken to the nearest quarter months, the time found may be surprisingly accurate.

"I gave this method in a radio talk a while back," said Dr. Wylie, "and a few days later I received a note from an Illinois farmer saying that he tried it twice that night and his clock seemed all right."

"Shooting stars" are really meteors, or small bits of stars.

Gold is said to have been the first metal worked by man.
