

STARGAZING

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Late spring and early summer evenings are excellent for stargazing. Not only has the temperature warmed up but the sight of three bright planets makes for an added bonus. The following map was adapted from one in the 1982 Observer's Handbook, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, 124 Merton St., Toronto. It shows the positions of the stars and planets as they would appear in Saskatchewan at 12:00 midnight on 10 May 1982 or 10:00 p.m. on 10 June 1982.

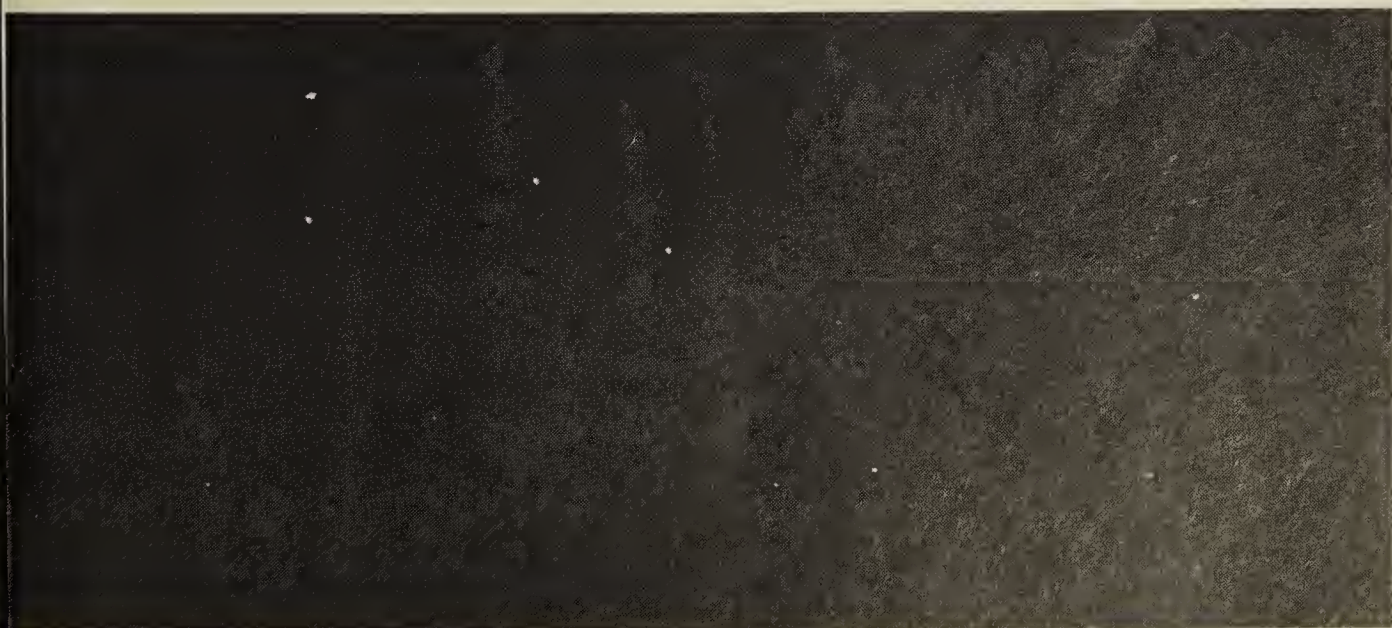
The three planets, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars, form a straight line in the southwest with the first magnitude star, Spica, located between Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter will be the brightest of the three planets. Try looking at Jupiter and Saturn with binoculars or a spotting scope. You should be able to see four moons near Jupiter. Their names are Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto. If you look at Saturn you may be able to make out the ring structure.

How many constellations can you identify? Most people can locate the Big

Dipper (Ursa Major). If you look northward from the two pointer stars in the Big Dipper (opposite side from the handle) you will see Polaris, the North Star. It is located at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper (Ursa Minor). Below Polaris you should see the constellation, Cassiopeia, which appears as a giant W in the northern sky. If you follow the curve outward from the handle of the Big Dipper, you will find Arcturus, a bright star in the constellation Bootes. Arcturus is unusual in that it is a Red Giant star, many times larger than the Sun in diameter. Can you detect its reddish colour?

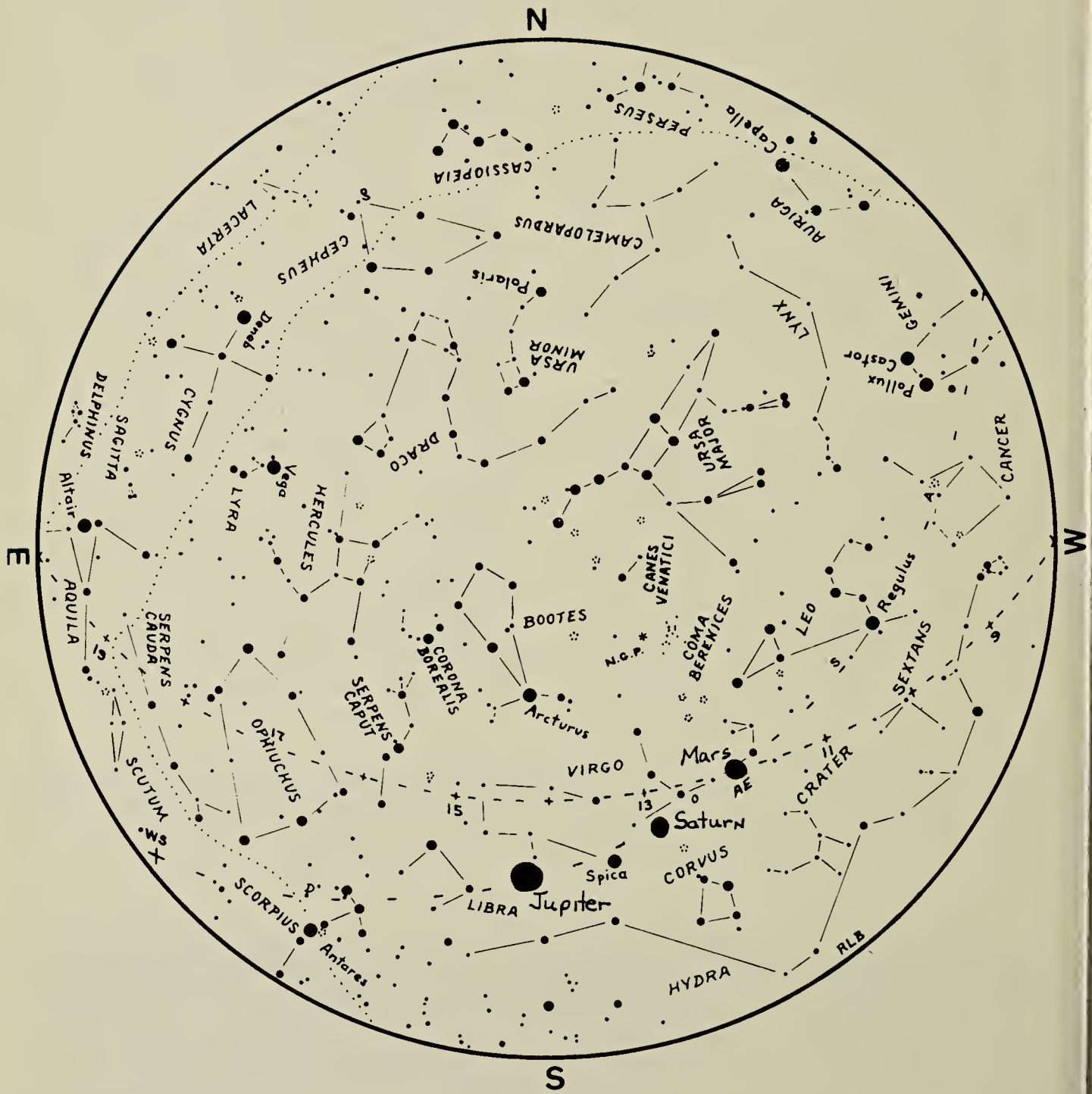
Weather permitting, a special event will take place on the evening of 5-6 July 1982. The event is a total eclipse of the moon which happens when the moon passes into the shadow of the earth. The partial phase of the eclipse begins when the moon enters the umbra at 11:33 p.m. C.S.T. The total eclipse will last from 12:38 a.m. until 2:24 a.m. The partial phase will last until 3:29 a.m.

Good viewing.



Big Dipper

F.W. Lahrman



Adapted from 1982 Observer's Handbook, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada