

Sky watch for July

THE SKY'S
THE LIMIT



NEEL ROBERTS

Moon — Tuesday was a full moon and a beautiful evening to take a stroll under.

Within the week, the moon won't rise until after midnight and by the weekend of July 18, a smaller crescent moon rises in the morning skies shortly before dawn.

If you are examining the moons craters and mountains with binoculars or telescope, you will notice that the moons features are most obvious near the line

between light and darkness.

Along this line, called the "terminator," shadows created by the angle of the sun offer a depth perspective on the moonscape.

Does Mars really get bigger than the moon?

No. If you got that email claiming that Mars will appear as large as the full moon on some evening in August, press the delete key.

It claims that Mars will not be this close again for 60,000 years. The entire story is as phony as a \$3 bill.

Mars actually will appear as a faint reddish star in the eastern pre-dawn skies this summer and your attention will be drawn towards brilliant Venus slightly closer to the horizon.

Mars will grow slightly in brightness each month until January, when the earth is closer than it will be in about 26 months. Mars will never appear as large as the moon.

Jupiter and Venus will appear bright in the morning hours just before sunrise.

If you have a good set of binoculars you'll notice Venus has lost its earlier crescent and Jupiter's four moons are also visible.

Total Solar Eclipse in China — Watch it live on TV or Internet July 21 starting at 5 p.m. our time, peak around 5:51 p.m. and ending at about an hour after.

Check out <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmono/TSE2009/TSE2009.html> for

details.

The next solar eclipse to cross North America is in August 2017.

Also, check out www.whatsuptonight.net, www.astronomy.com, www.space.com and www.nasa.gov.

They have much more detailed information and great stuff for kids for free.

Have you ever wondered what Saturn looks like during the day?

Come out to the Trek Station on July 18 (Show 'n' Shine weekend) and tentatively August 15 between 1-3 p.m. and see for yourself. You think it's awesome at night? Just wait until you see it at high noon!

Happy long days of summer and keep reaching for the sky!