

Daylight Saving Time Begins March 14

Astronomers at the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI) in Rosman remind the public that at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 14, Daylight Saving Time (DST) in the United States begins and we set our clocks forward one hour.

Some people get a bit confused by these changes between Standard and Daylight times thinking that somehow we really "save" time. But realize that this is not an astronomical phenomenon! The "lucky 'ol Sun just keeps rollin' along" no matter what the U.S. Congress declares. All we are doing is simply shifting our clocks within the solar day to suit our own convenience and save energy.

By the way, when you get up at 2 a.m. on March 14 to change your clocks, walk outside. The most obvious thing you will notice if you're away from artificial light sources is how dark it is. There will be no moon in the sky; new moon will be the next day, so the moon

will not rise until nearly 7 a.m. Over in the west you will notice a red object in the middle of Cancer, the crab; this is the red planet Mars. And high in the south in Virgo is the ringed planet Saturn. Take a look at it with a pair of binoculars and notice that it is not round; you're seeing its famous rings, now almost edge-on to our line of sight.

Now, those are astronomical phenomena!

About PARI

PARI is a not-for-profit foundation established in 1998. Located in the Pisgah Forest PARI offers educational programs at all levels, from K-12 through post-graduate research. The institute is affiliated with the 16-campus University of North Carolina system through PARSEC, a UNC Center hosted at PARI, and is a member of the NC Grassroots Museum Collaborative. For more information about PARI and its programs, visit www.pari.edu.