

## **FEBRUARY 2010 NAKED EYE ASTRONOMY.**

**Mercury** passed through greatest Western elongation – farthest angular distance from the Sun – on January 27. It is visible as a morning object early in the month.

**Venus** : passed through superior conjunction –opposite side of the Sun to Earth - on January 11. It will return to the evening sky in April 2010.

**Mars** is now rising around 7pm in the constellation of Cancer, and appears to be quite bright ( -1.25) and a reddish / orange colour. It is currently 0.66AU distant. and about 14 arc seconds in diameter . It will be close to the Moon on the 25<sup>th</sup> and on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Mars passed through opposition on January 19<sup>th</sup> and is now visible all night long – the main target for summer viewing.

**Jupiter** now is lost for viewing. It will pass through conjunction on February 28..

**Saturn** is now a late evening object, rising around 10pm in Libra. It is situated midway between Spica and Denebola, and quite bright at 0.44. It is currently 19 arcsec in diameter, and 8.8 AU distant. The rings are starting to open out again following the recent ring plane passage.

**Moon:** There will be NO Full Moon in February. This is a fairly rare occurrence, last having been in 1991. Next time will be in 2018. Whether or not this occurs at your location depends on your time zone. This comes about because we have had two full moons in January, and will have two full moons in March. The second full moon in any calendar month is colloquially known as the BLUE Moon. New Moon is on February 14.

**Site of the Month:** Sites giving times and information on Full Moon phase timings:

<http://www.obliquity.com/astro/nofullmoon.html>

or

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/MoonPhase.php>

ASTRONOMY IS LOOKING UP !!