

Not Always Heavenly

By Pete Clark

Mountain valleys or the open prairie are the best places to view the grandeur of a night sky. Light pollution is either non-existent or at a minimum in these isolated places, enhancing the appearance of our galaxy, the Milky Way, and the other points of light that are galaxies, nebulae or stars. It has been a while since I have had this pleasure. I will correct the problem this spring when I get past Virginia Dale and into God's Country where people are few and nature is abundant. Living in a stacked house in the city I must accept Luna as my only nocturnal heavenly body.

During the day, I don't notice the moon over Denver as I do when I am looking at the sky in Wyoming. The daytime moon is much brighter there. The craters, mountains and seas that delineate and make up the moon man's face stand out through the cleaner atmosphere of the Equality State, making the perception more clearly defined. Even so when I see the moon above at mid-day, I still take a good look to remind myself that I am a small part of something very large.

I find it interesting that although the moon is much smaller than the earth, the gravitational pull of the moon affects things that happen here, such as ocean tides and possibly other slightly noticed anomalies. European legends posit that people suffering from lycanthropy change into a wolf in human form on the night of a full moon, rampaging until the full moon sets and then return to normal.

It is widely believed that there is an uptick in crime and accidental injuries during a full moon. Statistical studies indicate that this is not the case. However, I have been told by several people who have worked in various hospital emergency rooms that they dreaded the uproar and confusion of night duty when the moon was full. A few policemen have made like comments about duty on those nights. It appears there is a reason behind the evolution of the word *lunatic*.

The most striking moon I have ever seen was in a big box department store in Denver a couple of years ago. I had finished my shopping, served my time standing in line to pay for my purchases and was on my way out of the store. I was walking past customer service when something drew my attention to a spot in the store, behind the cash registers. A young woman was standing in line with her back to me, bending forward and digging around in her shopping cart. It was a very mundane scene except for three things. The tail of her blouse was in the middle of her back, the waist of her slacks was around her knees and she wore no underwear. She presented a full moon that did not cast a silver glow upon all in its realm. Not all that impressed, I walked on, shaking my head, wondering if she really could be unaware of her state of exhibitionism and wishing a total eclipse had spared me the indelicate view.