Okay, time to grab your mallets and wooden stakes, torches and pitchforks, the evil creature is back! Which one you ask? The one I thought we had killed last year, the one that reports the Moon will be as big as Mars–and in gasping tones says, “And you can see it, and it won’t happen again in your lifetime, and tell all your friends.”

I have already had some questions about it. I hated to break their wide-eyed bubble of expectancy, but it just isn’t going to happen.

This particular rumor has been making the rounds of the Internet and chat-rooms since August of 2003 when Mars was indeed at its closest approach to Earth. An event that happens roughly every two and a half years.

It stems mostly from a misinterpretation of a statement in an e-mail that said, “At 75-power magnification Mars will look as big as the full Moon to the naked eye.” Somewhere, someone left off the “75-power” part and the “Mars as big as the full Moon” remained.

So, if you get one of them, reach over and press the delete key and pound a wooden stake into the evil creature’s heart and hope it stays dead.

Now, everyone off the couch, out of your easy chairs and get your little selves outside on the evening of Aug. 12, because you don’t want to miss the annual Perseid meteor shower.

The Perseids are one of the premium meteor showers of the year. The peak, or best viewing time, is the evening of Aug. 12-13. It could also be possible to see Perseids for a couple of days on either side of that date.

The swift-moving streaks of light will seem to radiate from the constellation Perseus which will rise over the northeastern horizon at about midnight.

The streaks are meteors, left-over bits of rock and debris no bigger than a grain of sand, from Comet 10P/Swift-Tuttle which litter the comet's orbital path. During peak observing time somewhere between 60 to 100 meteors per hour could be viewed as Earth moves through the debris stream.

The Moon will be out of the way and won't interfere with the show. So, find your favorite dark-sky place, take some lawn chairs or blankets, a nice jug of iced tea or coffee, some munchies, and some friends and enjoy one of the best cosmic shows of the year.

Perseus is a distinct constellation shaped like a large capital "A." It will rise in the northeast at about 11 p.m. MDT and be well-clear of the horizon by midnight.

Above and left of Perseus is the familiar "W" of Cassiopeia and to the right are the reaching arms of Andromeda, stretching out from the northeastern corner of Pegasus.

Since we are outside and looking up, why not try to find the Andromeda Galaxy. Start at the base of Andromeda where it attaches to Pegasus. Go out (left if you are looking east) for two sets of two stars each.

Draw a line from the bottom star of the second pair, up through the top star and keep on going for about the same distance. You are looking for a small, fuzzy-looking spot. That is the Andromeda Galaxy.

If you have binoculars it is a nice target, it you have even a small telescope it makes an interesting thing to look at.

Now, understand, you won't see what all the great pictures in astronomy magazines and textbooks show. What you will see is a small, fuzzy patch of light. If you would like to know, Andromeda is as far as the human eye can see without any optical aid, somewhere around six trillion miles.

Andromeda is a sister galaxy to the Milky Way, about the same size and shape. We are also rushing toward each other at a horrendous speed and will crash into each other in the future.

But, not to worry, that won’t happen for another 65 million years or so. So, don’t sell the ranch and move to a cave in the mountains.