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A Science Service Feature

July 3

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,  
of Clark University,  
discusses:

HEAT OF THE DOG DAYS

Today, July 3, begin the "Dog Days" a period of 40 days associated with hot muggy weather. The name does not refer to the animal, though perhaps some have thought of "dog days" as days on which dogs go mad, or lie around panting heavily in an effort to keep cool. Rather, the name is associated with Sirius, the Dog-Star, which rises with the sun about July 23, or in the middle of the period. In a time when celestial omens and influences were taken seriously, the innocent Dog-Star thus came to be blamed for the usual hot weather of midsummer. If one were to pick out the 40 days which averaged the hottest he would find that for most places in the north temperate zone that period corresponds to the Dog Days. The heat of summer culminates about a month after the time of highest sun, for a certain duration of heat at summer intensities is required to overcome the residual cold from spring.

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(Tomorrow: Fireworks and the Weather)

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