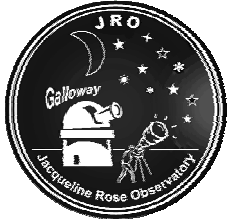
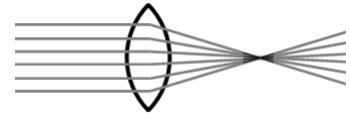


# The Lavon Lens



## Newsletter of The Jacqueline Rose Observatory

www.jerrygalloway.com/astro  
326 Houston, St. • Lavon, Texas • 214-605-0819



Vol. 1, No. 3 – December, 2007

### THE MONTH of MARS

Every couple years (about 26 months) Mars and Earth come close together. So, we go around the sun about twice while Mars orbits once. On alternating years, we're on opposite sides of the sun – very far away. So, every couple years as we get close to Mars news reports start talking about it, usually in error. Rumors get started and a lot of folks can easily hear some bad ideas about it. The latest has been that Mars will appear as big as the moon. Wrong.

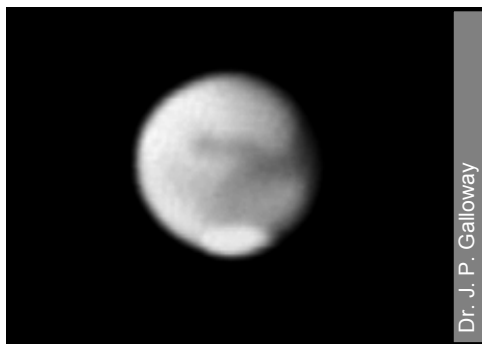
This mid-December will be the ideal time to view Mars. We will be closer than we've been and closer than we will be for another couple years. Mars will appear much bigger than normal. After December 16<sup>th</sup> it will get much smaller very quickly. So, there is a brief opportunity and we don't want to miss it.

However, Mars really is very small. About 4200 miles in diameter whereas Earth is about 7500 miles – almost twice as large. This December Mars will still be about 55 million miles away – AT BEST. This will be like seeing a small quarter about 4 football fields away. At best, the moon will still appear 120 times larger than Mars. So, while we can watch Mars in the night sky every night (throughout this season and into the winter and spring), you will need a telescope to get a closer look.

Even in telescopes it will appear very small. If the dust storms from this summer are still around, there won't be much surface detail. But, we might just get a good look with a big enough telescope. Come join us.

### Size of Mars - Compared to the Moon

Let's make the moon as large as this page is wide. With the moon fitting across this whole page, Mars, at the best time this season as seen from Earth, would be the size of this dot.



Dr. J. P. Galloway

Consider the Moon as Wide as This Page

### Comet 17P Holmes Visible with Binoculars

I have found comets very difficult to see even when knowing where they are. But, it can be a thrill to see one. I have not yet seen this one but will setup very soon to go after it. Perhaps on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at our regular public outing we can all see it with *Big Foot*, the large 14" telescope we'll have setup. Try binoculars or your own telescope as this should be viewable even with small equipment in our area. Here are a couple web URL's to help you.

Be careful to transpose the URL accurately to your browser. If reading the online version, try to cut-&-paste it to your browser.

<http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap071026.html>

And, try this long one. Note that it wraps around more than one line here...

<http://www.astronomy.com/asy/default.aspx?c=a&id=6183>

### Future Newsletters

Special thanks to our sponsors and supporters. Without them, we would have to publish quarterly and/or reduce distribution only to club members and the Grand Heritage area. For now, we'll continue monthly. The Lavon Lens is also available online although still black & white. With a larger interest in the online version, we might do complete color in the future. Read about the JRO observatory on the back and join the club TODAY.

## Location Change

Our club has an outing the first Friday of every month. The new location for that outing will be at:

326 Houston St., Lavon, TX  
in the Grand Heritage Subdivision.  
[see the map online]

“Big Foot” – the large LX200-14” scope after some initial viewing will be devoted to taking a picture of Mars. For visual viewing, other telescopes will remain available.

Anyone is welcome and encouraged to bring their own telescope and setup on site. Whether you need assistance with your equipment or are just looking for a good excuse to break it out, this is your opportunity. Be sure to bring friends and anyone who might be interested. Bring your folding chairs and hot cup of coffee. This December outing might prove to be cold and brisk – finally. Dress accordingly. And, special thanks to Napolis Pizza for supporting the event and the club.

## Starting Time ?

Normally, everyone would just gather informally when it gets dark. We will be setting up equipment so you are still welcome to arrive early. **This Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, we are planning a multimedia presentation starting at 8:00pm.**

## Rain? Clouds?

**THIS ONE TIME... we will still make a presentation – even if too cloudy.** We always hope for good weather and clear skies. So, if it turns out badly, the public event would normally be cancelled – probably at the last minute. A notice would be posted on the web site under [Current Events] so, if you’re not sure, check there.

Members of the club will be notified of other setups and observing as they occur throughout the month. While we would not announce again to the general public, we would be inviting club members back to any follow up attempts. Because of Mars,

all the more reason to attempt a photo at this time. Observing the long and elaborate process of capturing a photo is of course open to everyone but your own direct observing can be more exciting. Join the club to be on the contact list for this and other activities.

## JRO

The planned Bear Creek G.H. location for the JRO Observatory is cancelled. A new location is already set and the JRO is **expected to open in the Spring.** It will be the home for the astronomy club and for **Big Foot**, the 14 inch research-class schmidt-cassegrain telescope.

### Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

Thanks to: **The UPS Store**  
5250 Hwy 78 - Sachse, TX  
(972) 495-7666 Tel  
(972) 495-6446 fax  
Email: store5631@theupsstore.com

Thanks to: **Italian Villa**  
(Next to Dollar General)  
401 Hwy 78 - Wylie, TX 75098  
972-429-4799

**SMITH & JONES – The Party Band**  
(Family Entertainment – Any Event)  
Country ● Classic Rock ● Oldies  
smithandjoneslive.com 972-605-0819



**CiCi's Pizza**  
2014 Hwy 78 - Wylie, TX  
(972) 461-9700  
Supporting our Night of Observing!

Thanks to:

**THE SALE**  
**Hardware Supplies**  
of Nevada  
1 Mile North of Lavon



6930 Hwy 78  
Nevada, TX

(972) 843-6700 Tel  
(972) 853-5065 fax

Open 7 Days a Week

Jacqueline Rose Observatory  
326 Houston St. – Lavon, TX 75166

**Postal Customer**  
**Lavon, TX 75166**