

## Q-C Living

### Q-C SKY WATCH

# Mars' orbit makes it look bigger

**POPULAR ASTRONOMY CLUB**

Unusual things are happening in our sky this month: Mars is getting closer to Earth; Saturn will be near Mars; and Jupiter will meet the moon. And you can see them all.

Every two and a half years, Mars' orbit brings it close to Earth. This April and May, it will be closer and appear larger than it has in the last 10 years. The red planet will be close enough that you can see its landscape with a reasonably-sized telescope.

It will grow in size until May 30, when it will be huge. Then it slowly will shrink until August, when it will disappear from our view. To see Mars during this period, look to the southeast where it rises.

Several heavenly bodies will be pairing up in April. East of Mars, Saturn will be visible. The two planets — the red and the ringed — will be close enough to be photographed together. Then at 9 p.m. April 17, Jupiter will be very close to our moon, which will be waxing three-quarters full.

The Popular Astronomy Club meets at 7 p.m. the second Monday of each month at Augustana College's John Deere Planetarium, 639 38th St., Rock Island. The club also has monthly public observing sessions every third Saturday from March through November at Niabi Zoo, 13010 Niabi Zoo Road, Coal Valley. Also this month, the Popular Astronomy Club is hosting its Astronomy Day presentation at 1 p.m. April 23, at the Moline Public Library, 3210 41st St.