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Comet Comments - 12/08/96

From: egs@netcom.com (Edward G. Stewart)
Date: Tue, 17 Dec 1996 15:41:38 -0800 (PST)
Fwd Date: Wed, 18 Dec 1996 01:03:37 -0500
Subject: Comet Comments - 12/08/96

From: baalke@kelvin.jpl.nasa.gov (Ron Baalke)
Newsgroups: [sci.astro](#),[alt.sci.planetary](#)
Subject: Comet Comments - 12/08/96
Date: 17 Dec 1996 22:09 UT
Organization: Jet Propulsion Laboratory

COMET COMMENTS
Don Machholz
December 8, 1996

Comet Hale-Bopp passes north of the sun and into the morning sky on Dec. 31. Observers with a low eastern horizon should be able to pick it up again by the third week of January.

In the past few weeks stories of "mysterious" objects in the vicinity of the comet have circulated. The most popular-a Saturn-like Object (SLO) imaged on Nov. 14 by an amateur astronomer- turned out to be nothing other than an 8.5 magnitude star. Other similar objects that I've seen on Internet images appear to be out-of-focus images of bright stars. In all respects Comet Hale-Bopp is behaving as an average comet. It is bigger than perhaps any comet we have seen, but its variable brightness, tails and jets are normal. If anything mysterious truly appears, you will find it reported in the mainstream press, and in most cases be able to go outside and see it yourself through your telescope.

Meanwhile, Comet Tabur dims in our morning sky. Its magnitude has been unpredictable lately. Periodic Comet Wirtanen is returning. The Hubble Space telescope imaged it in August 1996 and "measured" the nucleus' diameter to be 1.16 km. Finally, Periodic Comet Wild 2 should be visible for several months.

EPHEMERIDES

C/1995 O1 (Hale-Bopp)

Date(00UT)	R.A. (2000)	Dec	El	Sky	Mag
12-08	18h11.6m	+00o18'	29o	E	3.9
12-13	18h17.3m	+01o03'	28o	E	3.7
12-18	18h23.4m	+01o53'	27o	E	3.5
12-23	18h29.9m	+02o49'	27o	E	3.3
12-28	18h36.7m	+03o51'	27o	E	3.1
01-02	18h44.0m	+05o01'	28o	M	2.9
01-07	18h51.7m	+06o18'	29o	M	2.7
01-12	19h00.0m	+07o45'	31o	M	2.5
01-17	19h08.9m	+09o22'	32o	M	2.2
01-22	19h18.5m	+11o11'	34o	M	1.9
01-27	19h29.0m	+13o13'	36o	M	1.7
02-01	19h40.5m	+15o29'	38o	M	1.4
02-06	19h53.4m	+18o01'	40o	M	1.1
02-11	20h07.8m	+20o50'	41o	M	0.7

C/1996 Q1 (Tabur)

Date(00UT)	R.A. (2000)	Dec	El	Sky	Mag
12-08	15h59.9m	+19°46'	45°	M	10.6
12-13	16h03.5m	+18°08'	46°	M	10.9
12-18	16h06.7m	+16°39'	47°	M	11.2
12-23	16h09.5m	+15°19'	48°	M	11.5
12-28	16h11.8m	+14°07'	50°	M	11.8
01-02	16h13.8m	+13°02'	53°	M	12.0
01-07	16h15.4m	+12°05'	56°	M	12.2
01-12	16h16.4m	+11°13'	59°	M	12.4
01-17	16h16.9m	+10°27'	62°	M	12.6
01-22	16h16.9m	+09°47'	66°	M	12.8
01-27	16h16.2m	+09°11'	70°	M	13.0
02-01	16h14.7m	+08°39'	75°	M	13.1
02-06	16h12.5m	+08°11'	80°	M	13.3
02-11	16h09.5m	+07°46'	85°	M	13.4

46P/Wirtanen

Date(00UT)	R.A. (2000)	Dec	El	Sky	Mag
12-08	21h53.2m	-24°24'	66°	E	13.3
12-13	22h02.7m	-23°13'	64°	E	13.1
12-18	22h12.6m	-21°58'	61°	E	13.0
12-23	22h23.1m	-20°37'	59°	E	12.8
12-28	22h34.1m	-19°11'	57°	E	12.6
01-02	22h45.5m	-17°40'	55°	E	12.4
01-07	22h57.4m	-16°02'	53°	E	12.2
01-12	23h09.8m	-14°19'	52°	E	12.0
01-17	23h22.6m	-12°30'	50°	E	11.8
01-22	23h35.9m	-10°34'	49°	E	11.6
01-27	23h49.7m	-08°33'	48°	E	11.4
02-01	00h03.9m	-06°26'	47°	E	11.2
02-06	00h18.7m	-04°13'	46°	E	11.1
02-11	00h34.0m	-01°54'	45°	E	10.9

81P/Wild 2

Date(00UT)	R.A. (2000)	Dec	El	Sky	Mag
12-08	08h21.0m	+16°38'	133°	M	12.5
12-13	08h22.3m	+16°36'	137°	M	12.3
12-18	08h22.9m	+16°36'	142°	M	12.1
12-23	08h22.7m	+16°41'	147°	M	11.9
12-28	08h21.7m	+16°49'	153°	M	11.7
01-02	08h19.9m	+17°02'	158°	M	11.6
01-07	08h17.4m	+17°18'	164°	M	11.4
01-12	08h14.3m	+17°38'	170°	M	11.2
01-17	08h10.6m	+18°01'	176°	M	11.0
01-22	08h06.5m	+18°27'	177°	E	10.9
01-27	08h02.3m	+18°54'	172°	E	10.8
02-01	07h58.2m	+19°22'	166°	E	10.6
02-06	07h54.3m	+19°49'	159°	E	10.5
02-11	07h51.1m	+20°16'	154°	E	10.4

ELEMENTS

Object	Hale-Bopp	Tabur
Peri. Date	1997 04 01.13453	1996 11 03.52688
Peri. Dist (AU)	0.9141030 AU	0.8398272 AU
Arg/Peri (2000):	130.59083 deg.	057.40724 deg.
Asc. Node (2000):	282.47069 deg.	031.40177 deg.
Incl (2000)	089.42936 deg.	073.35813 deg.
Eccen:	0.9950969	0.9989006
Orbital Period:	~4700 years	Long period
Ref:	MPC 28052	MPC 28052
Epoch:	1997 03 13	1996 11 13
Absol. Mag/"n":	-2.0/4.0	9.5/4.0

Object	P/Wirtanen	P/Wild 2
Peri. Date	1997 03 14.14299	1997 05 06.62789
Peri. Dist (AU)	1.0637469 AU	1.5826156 AU
Arg/Peri (2000):	356.34322 deg.	041.77000 deg.
Asc. Node (2000):	082.20387 deg.	136.15458 deg.
Incl (2000)	011.72255 deg.	003.24276 deg.
Eccen:	0.6567490	0.5402220
Orbital Period:	5.46 years	6.39 years
Ref:	MPC 27080	MPC 28272
Epoch:	1997 03 13	1997 04 22
Absol. Mag/"n":	9.0/6.0	7.0/6.0

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Don Machholz

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Ed Stewart - egs@netcom.com - | So Man, who here seems principal alone,
"There is | Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown.
Something Going On!" ,>'?'<, | Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal,
-Salvador Freixedo- (O O) | 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
-----oo00-(_)-00oo----- Alexander Pope, Essay on Man -----

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