

February 3, 2015

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[Comet Festival](#)

November 28-December 8, 2013

South Bend, Indiana

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Introduction



Welcome to the **2013 Comet Festival**, an opportunity to observe and to understand a celestial phenomenon. The community around South Bend, IN, celebrates the predictability, uncertainty, and wonder of nature, with [events](#) at multiple venues including art exhibits, guest speakers, a community treasure hunt, family activities, education outreach, music, food and beverage specials, and

observing with telescopes.

The Comet Festival will technically begin when Comet ISON makes its closest approach to the sun the afternoon (EST, UT-5) of Thanksgiving Day, November 28. Fewer than a million miles from the surface of the sun, the icy comet will encounter searing heat that expels copious debris from the solar system interloper. In its wake--if it even survives--the comet may leave a distinctive tail.

The Festival does not shy away from the unknown fate of Comet ISON. Written at [Comet Brightness Difficult to Predict](#):

So we wait and see. In the interim, let's not be afraid to celebrate Comet ISON's sungrazing, even if its eventual brightness is not well-predicted. If your expectations cause you to wait for a brightness level with surety, you may never live to experience a Comet Festival. Embrace the uncertainty now.

While we will raise a toast to Comet ISON on Thanksgiving Day as it rounds the sun, the opening public events for the Comet Festival will be Friday, November 29, 2013, in South Bend, IN. Depending on the comet's status and viewing circumstances, telescopes will be set up in the mornings in the first week of December after Comet ISON moves a little bit away from the sun. [In the morning sky](#) will also be Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter to enjoy.

If the comet survives its sungrazing and emerges on the other side, it has the potential to be a good sight before sunrise in the first days of December. It makes its closest approach to earth on December 26, but at a comfortable 40 million miles away. A [video by Richard Bell](#) shows sungrazing comets from the perspective of the SOHO spacecraft. Many comets succumb to the sun's extreme influence, and Comet ISON could be among them.

Comets are admittedly fickle, and this one could emerge from the sun as a twilight spectacle in December or be destroyed by its close encounter before or on Thanksgiving Day. We don't know. But therein lies part of the mystery that we anticipate.

The events of this celestial celebration are modeled on the community support for the 2012 transit of Venus and its [TROVE successes](#). Please share your talent, ideas, and resources as we prepare for the 2013 Comet Festival. Thanks for your [support](#).

Celebrate science not because we know all the answers, but because we don't.

Events

Festival events include art exhibits, education outreach, guest speakers, family activities, food and beverage specials, a community treasure hunt, and observing with telescopes.

See [Calendar](#).

See [Map](#).

Press Releases

[New Comet Inspires Festival \(2013 Aug 14\)](#)

A community responds proactively to a sungrazing comet that has an uncertain outcome but significant potential.

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