

REFLECTIONS / REFRACTIONS

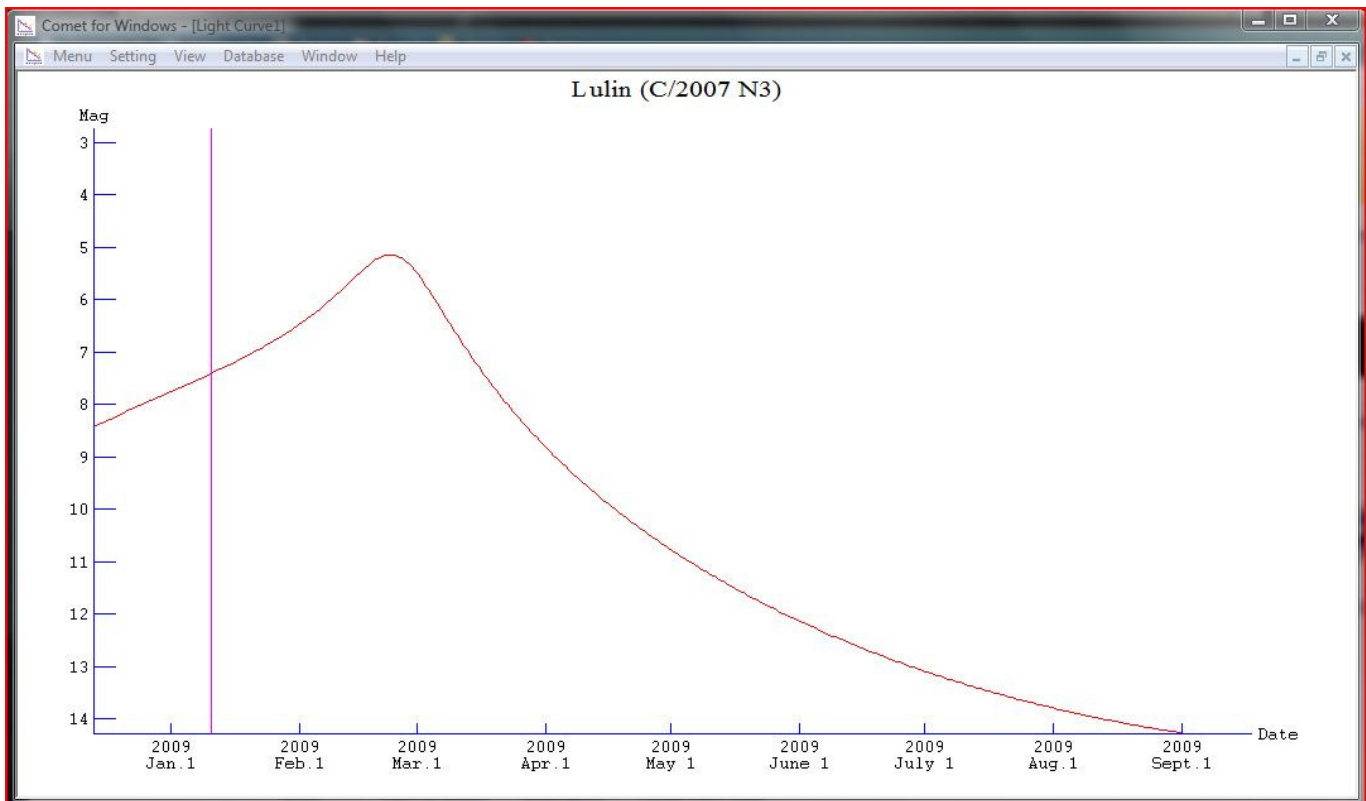
FEBRUARY 2009 EXTRA

Attention Lowbrows! Supplemental Newsletter!

Naked-Eye Comet?

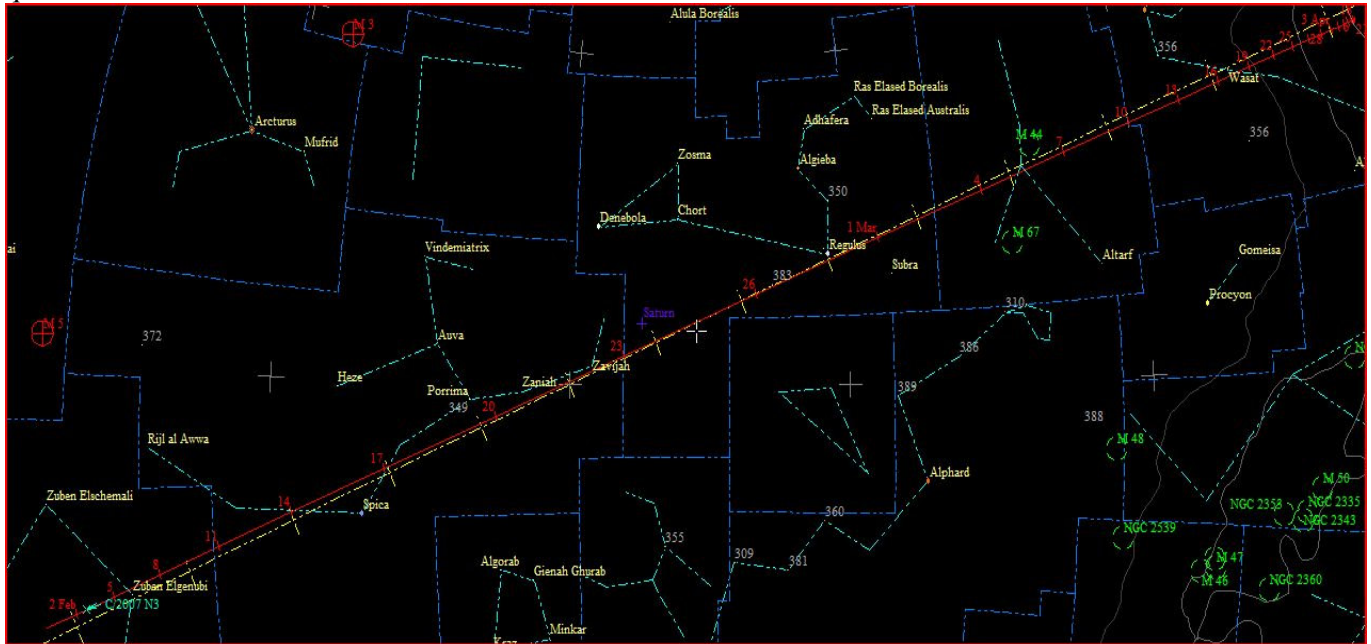
By Mark S Deprest

Comet C/2007 N3 (Lulin) currently located about 4 degrees east of Zuben Elgenubi or alpha Libra just 1 degree north of the ecliptic. This comet is currently being seen in 10x50 binoculars under good conditions in dark skies, reports have it ranging from 6.8 to 6.3 magnitude (m1). It will continue to move west along the ecliptic thru Libra, Virgo and almost thru Leo during the month of February as well as brighten slowing to a peak of about 5.0 magnitude (m1) on February 23rd. As it moves west it will rise earlier each day and by March 1st it will rise at sunset and be visible all night, with the comet near its brightest about 5 degrees west of Regulus or alpha Leo and still hugging the ecliptic. Thru Cancer and 2/3rds on the way into Gemini for the month of March and fading to 8.5 magnitude (m1) by the beginning of April. Below is the projected light curve for this comet.



Please note that all magnitudes are (m1) or total magnitude, so these numbers can be deceptive, m1 represents the total magnitude of an extended object like a globular cluster or galaxy, these are not stellar magnitudes! How many times have you looked at M-13 the Hercules Globular cluster at 5.8 magnitude or M-31 the Andromeda Galaxy at 4.3 magnitude naked-eye, these are extended objects and not always visible from our skies without optical aid. In fact the way visual comet observers estimate a comet's magnitude is to compare it to a star that is defocused to a similar size as the comet.

Doug Nell mentioned this comet in his "Some Cool Events for 2009" article and I recently received a couple of questions regarding this comet and just how bright this comet might get. So, this article has, I hope answers those questions.



Above is a chart of the track the comet will take over the next 90 days. My suggestion to anyone who has even the slightest interest in comets to get out and see this one, you won't be disappointed.

Perihelion was January 10th, as is indicated by the vertical red line in the graph above and as the comet moves to its closest approach to earth on February 23rd at 0.413 AU it also reaches its brightest at 5.0 magnitude (m1).

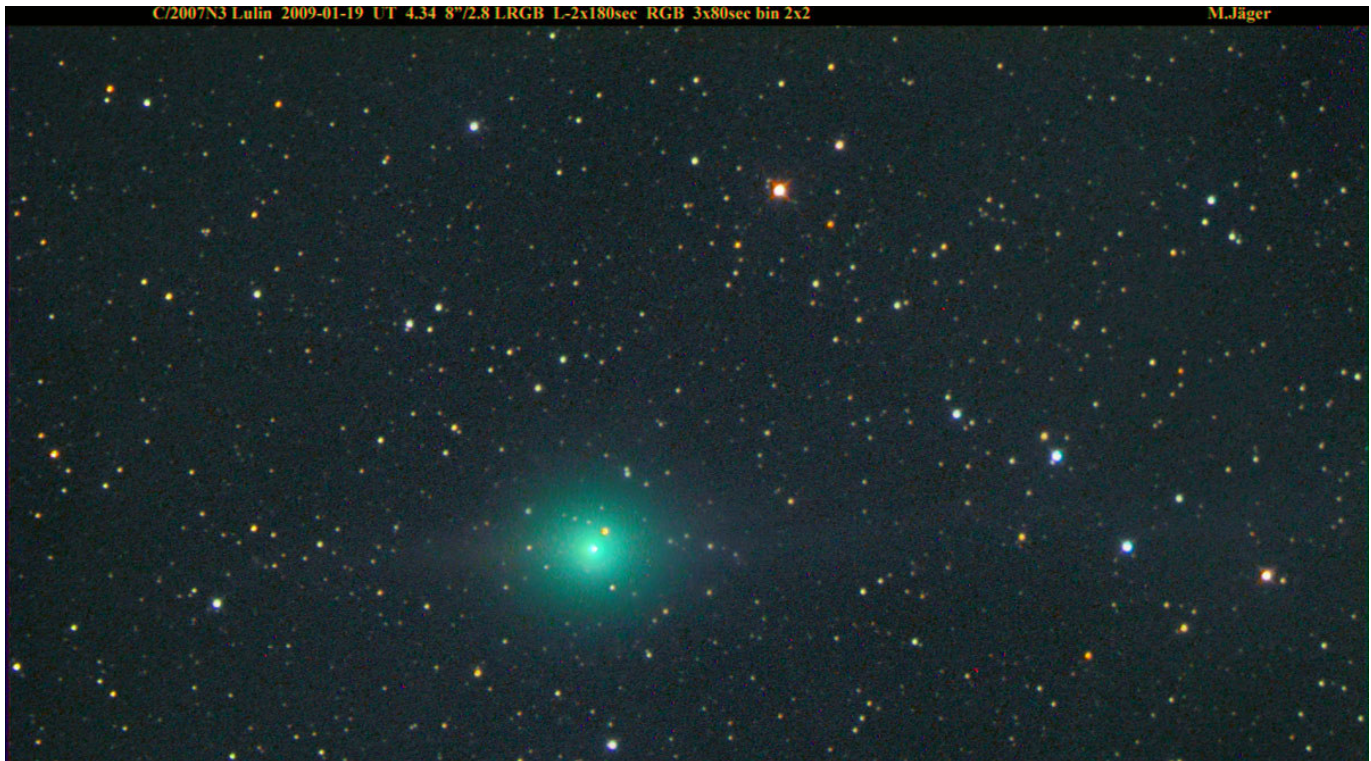


Image by M. Jaeger and published with permission.



6th Annual

Astronomy Expo & Swap

Saturday, Mar 7, 2009 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Holy Cross Church Gymnasium, 30650 Six Mile, Livonia

The Day's Activities

FAAC Speakers

- 10:00 am: Astronomy 101 – G. Hansen
- 11:00 am: Climbing the Learning Curve – Astrophotography with a DSLR – C Kessler
- 12:00 pm: Astronomy 102 – Practical Astronomy for Newcomers – J Schroer
- 1:00 pm: Binocular Observing
- 2:00 pm: Building/Assembling Your Own Telescope Workshop – M Kedzior

Featured Astronomy Subjects

- 10:30 am: Introduction to the Dark Sky: Finding It – Saving It – F Ancona
- 11:30 am: Choosing Astrophotography Equipment – T Licata
- 1:00 pm: Stars and Disks (and Planets?), Oh My! – Dr. K Bjorkman
- 2:00 pm: Star Testing Your Optics: A Primer on Optical Aberrations – T Trusock
- 3:00 pm: Extrasolar Planets - Dr. F Adams

Planetarium Lectures @ 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm – T Cervenak

Information: Tom Blaszak via email: key_string_guy@yahoo.com or
Don Klaser via e-mail: dklaser4750@wowway.com or
John Schroer via –mail: jschroer@sciencedetroit.org

Catering by KIM
(Pizza, Hot dogs, Wraps, and other Morsels)

Admission: \$5.00 at the door or presale.

Table Fee: Individuals \$15 in advance or if available at the door \$20

Advanced Registration ends February 15, 2009

Doors Open at 8 AM for set up and Public Open at 9 AM.

**Make Checks Payable to: FAAC. Send payment to Ford Amateur Astronomy Club,
P.O. Box 7527, Dearborn, MI 48121-7527.**

**Vendors, Manufacturers, Commercial contact Tom Blaszak at
key_string_guy@yahoo.com or contact Don Klaser at dklaser4750@wowway.com**

