

<http://www.space.com/17762-newfound-comet-dazzling-2013-display-c2012s1.html>

The most exciting aspect of this new comet concerns its preliminary orbit, which bears a striking resemblance to that of the “Great Comet of 1680.” That comet put on a dazzling show; it was glimpsed in daylight and later, as it moved away from the sun, it threw off a brilliantly long tail that stretched up from the western twilight sky after sunset like a narrow searchlight beam for some 70 degrees of arc. (A person's clenched fist, held at arm's length, covers roughly 10 degrees of sky.)

The fact that the orbits are so similar seems to suggest Comet ISON and the Great Comet of 1680 could be related or perhaps even the same object.

Comet ISON will be barely visible to the unaided eye when it is in the predawn [night sky](#), positioned against the stars of Leo in October 2013.

On Oct. 16 it will be passing very near both Mars and the bright star Regulus — both can be used as benchmarks to sighting the comet. In November, it could be as bright as third-magnitude when it passes very close to the bright first-magnitude star Spica in Virgo.

The few days surrounding the comet's closest approach to the sun on Nov. 28, 2013, are likely to be most interesting. It will whirl rapidly around the sun in a hairpin-like curve and perhaps becomes a dazzlingly bright (negative-magnitude) object.

The comet will then whirl north after perihelion and become visible during December both in the evening sky after sunset and in the morning sky before sunrise. Just how bright it will be and how long the tail may get during this time frame is anybody's guess, but there is hope that it could evolve into a memorable celestial showpiece.

