

116 Marquette Road
Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830

2 Dec. 1965

Dear Mrs. Yane:

Enclosed herewith are my C&N reports for November and a photograph of Comet Ikeya-Seki (not my own). My reports for this month are skimpy partly because of a severe respiratory infection that kept me in bed for about 10 days and out of the weather most of the month. I probably became ill as a result of watching Comet Ikeya-Seki in the chill dawn without sufficiently warm clothing; henceforth I shall be more careful about that.

The photograph was made by a friend of mine, John Landry, who graciously made this print for the Montreal Centre. It is not a good picture, but the best that I have been able to get hands on. Data are as follows: Original picture made on Kodachrome II with a 35-mm single-lens-reflex camera, two minute exposure at $f/2$. The color slide was enlarged onto a paper negative, which was then contact printed. Mr. Landry informed me that he dodged in printing the negative in order to blacken the sky at the very top and also the immediate foreground somewhat, and that he retouched the star images on the negative to accentuate them. The exposure was made on the morning of 31 October at about 0545E. This was a very poor morning because of heavy atmospheric haze.

The visual appearance of the comet here was quite similar to that in the picture, although it was perhaps actually a little brighter. I could easily follow the tail all the way up to Nu Hydra without binoculars. The photograph was made about the same time as the one on the cover of Sky and Telescope for December, also the two pictures on the bottom of p. 345 of that issue. I could not see any detail in the tail such as was shown in those pictures. I believe the three stars around the head are Delta, Gamma, and Epsilon Corvi; the pair near the end of the tail (in the picture) are Delta and Gamma Crateris, and the fainter pair near the middle of the tail are Eta and Zeta Crateris.

Looking for this comet was an interesting experience. About 10 days before perihelion I started getting up about 5:00EST and sweeping the eastern and southeastern sky with my 9x63 binoculars until well after dawn. At that time it was foggy in the mornings in the valley where I live, so I had to drive 2 or 3 miles to a high point on the Ridge to get above the fog before I could start searching. A couple of days before perihelion I concluded that it was probably too close to the sun, and gave up in disgust. Then on Wednesday (27 Oct) I got my Sky and Telescope with predicted positions, so I got out my sky charts and figured where it should be and determined to make one more attempt. On Thursday morning I didn't hear the alarm! Friday morning I did hear it, and drove up to the top of the Ridge without too much hopes of seeing anything. But as I stepped out of the car, right under a street light, there it was right in front of me! I was totally unprepared for anything so spectacular. I had expected a point of light with a tail half a degree at most, and this tail was, I estimated quickly, 15 or 20 degrees long and half a degree wide (I later measured the length as 25°). I didn't wait for a second look but jumped in the car and hurried home to awaken the children. The foggy weather had moved out and we could see it from our back yard--partially blocked by trees and houses, but we could get a pretty good view.

On Saturday morning (30 Oct.), after driving most of the night, we were just south of Louisville, Kentucky. My wife spotted the comet out the car window, and

I pulled off the road for a look. Sunday morning back in Oak Ridge the sky was so hazy that I couldn't see it from our yard and I didn't think it worth while to go anywhere else. Monday (1 Nov) was fair with only light haze. I observed from a field near our house where the sky was not obscured by trees. I was a little late getting out and didn't stay long. On Tuesday (2 Nov) the air was quite clear; I observed from the same field, and this time made a sketch. I tried to pick up detail with the binoculars, but couldn't see any. I could see the head with binoculars, but not naked-eye. On Wednesday (~~2~~ 3 Nov) there was some haze and the viewing wasn't too good so I didn't stay out. Thursday morning was overcast and foggy, and by Friday I was sick in bed so that was the end of my comet-watching. My main regret is that I didn't make any pictures myself. We had out-of-town guests that week, so I had to squeeze in the time for the little bit of observing that I did do. Have been wondering if you could see the comet from Montreal, and will be looking for a report in the next Skyward if it was possible.

On the Friday morning after I first saw it I called the editor of the local newspaper. He is quite interested in astronomy and he put in a nice little write-up about it. Quite a number of people have since told me that they got up and saw the comet as a result of the newspaper article.

One of the fellows here has just gotten a 10-inch Cassegrainian telescope (Celestron). I am looking forward to trying it out one of these nights.

Best wishes for the holiday season.

Sincerely yours,

Justin Long

P. S. - Monday. I didn't get this in the mail last week and my Skyward arrived Saturday!