In November the comet will appear as a fuzzy spot of light near the horizon at dawn. It will not be visible in some areas because of ground lights or early morning storms. The day after it reaches its perihelion, the comet will be an expected brightness of magnitude 4 to -5, which may be brighter than Halley's comet. There are indications that the comet may even be bright enough to be visible through telescopes during the daytime.

By January 10, Comet Kohoutek will be slowly moving into the evening sky an hour after sunset, just above the southern horizon. The best view of the comet will be from January 10 to 20, when it will be in its closest approach to the earth. It will appear slightly higher in the sky.

This astronomical phenomenon will be visible throughout January and much of February, and will then fade rapidly. Comets are solid conglomerations of frozen gas and dust which travel in elliptical orbits around the sun. They are described as being somewhat like dirty snowballs. They are thought to be "leftovers" from the creation of our solar system.

As a comet near the sun it is heated by solar radiation. Tons of water vapor are carried out into space behind it. This stream of dust and gas reflects the light of the sun, creating the tail of the comet.

Comet Kohoutek is coming in from an estimated distance of 16,000 to 20,000 astronomical units. (One astronomical unit is 93 million miles, the distance from the earth to the sun.) It has taken the comet about two million years to travel across that distance.

Because the comet will be losing mass as it is melted by the sun, scientists expect it to return only 1/10 as far into space. The period of the comet will diminish from approximately 4 years to 75,000 years.

Scientists estimate that Comet Kohoutek will have a nucleus which is about five to ten miles across. This is almost identical to the size of Halley's comet. The tail of Comet Kohoutek may be anywhere from 20 to 30 million miles long.

As interest in the comet increases it becomes more visible. The Charles Hayden Planetarium in Boston will set up information centers for all questions about the comet. The planetarium will also have a special telephone hotline for questions, 723-2500, extension 276, which will be open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm.