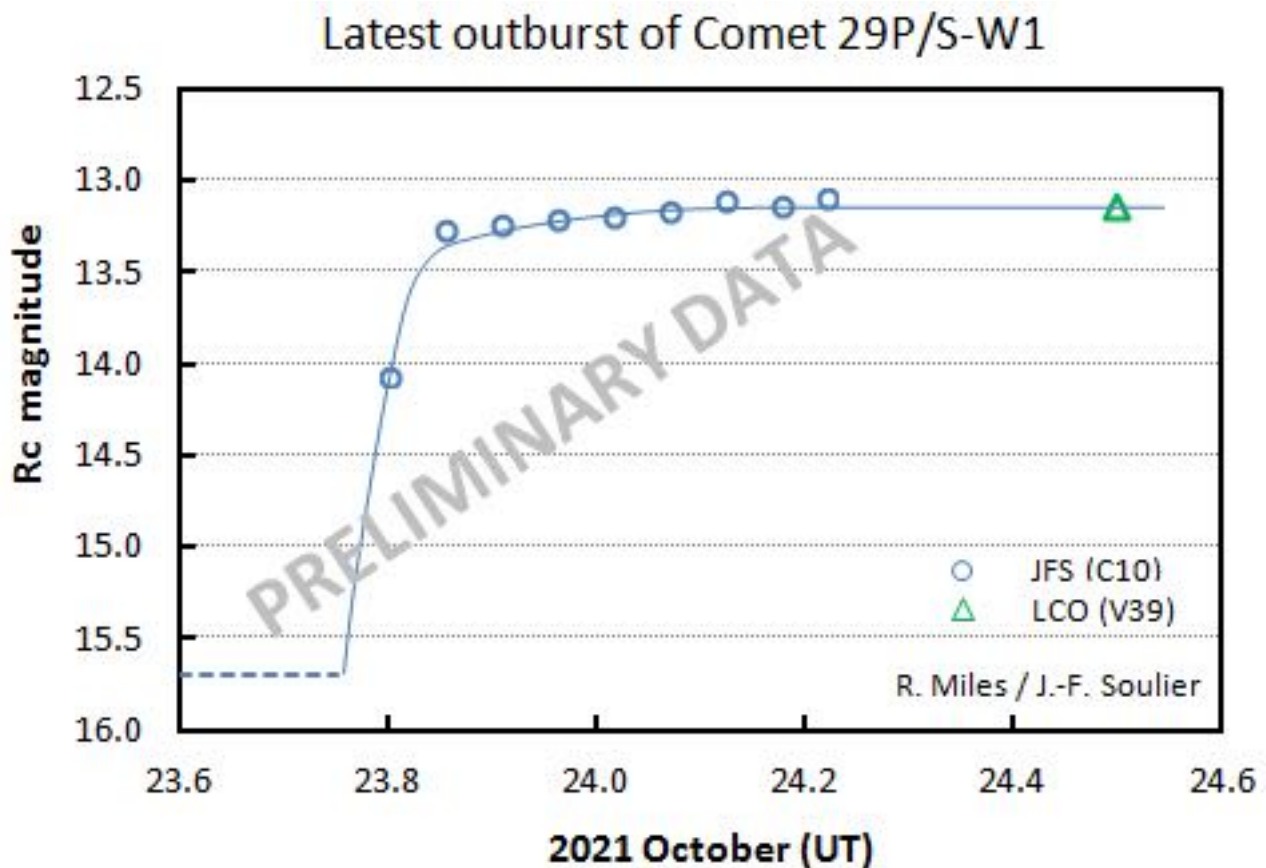
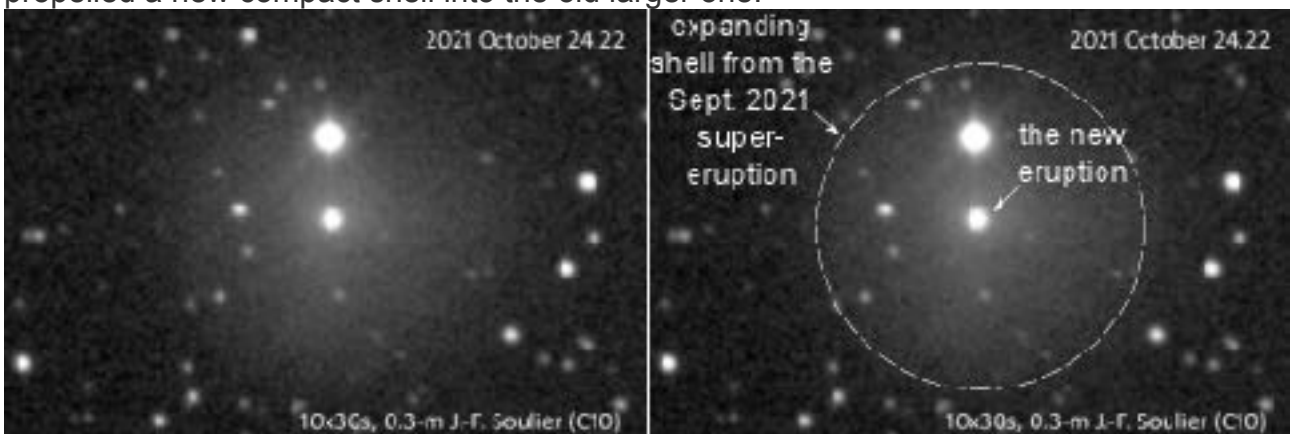


COMET 29P ERUPTS AGAIN: The British Astronomical Association (BAA) is reporting another strong outburst of Comet 29P/Schwassmann-Wachmann. [The volcanic comet](#) suddenly brightened 10-fold on Oct. 23.75 UT when a sunlit vent opened, spewing 'cryomagma' into space. Dr. Richard Miles of the BAA provided this light curve:



Comet 29P is one of the strangest objects in the solar system. In fact, it strains the definition of "comet." 29P is a ball of ice 60 km wide (much larger than a typical comet) trapped in a planet-like orbit between Jupiter and Saturn. It appears to be festooned with ice volcanoes which erupt ~20 times a year. A rapidfire "super-eruption" of 4 volcanoes in late September created an expanding shell of vaporized cryomagma, which astronomers have been monitoring. Yesterday's eruption propelled a new compact shell into the old larger one:



Above: Comet 29P photographed less than 12 hours after the Oct. 23rd eruption. Credit: Jean-Francois Soulier of France.

29P rotates once every ~58 days. As sunlight sweeps across its frozen surface, cryovolcanoes erupt under the high sun. "The latest eruption has taken place some 59 days after a similar event on August 25th, and may be an example of an outburst from the same cryovolcano erupting a second time on the next rotation of the nucleus," says Miles