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## Flaming Meteor Streaks Across Northwestern Skies

March 12, 2005

By [KOMO Staff & News Services](#)

SEATTLE - A fireball streaked through the night sky across the western half of the Pacific Northwest on Saturday, startling people all the way from southern Oregon to the Seattle area.

Hundreds of Washington residents called the KOMO news desk to report seeing a bright green object streak across the sky just before 8 p.m.

Scientists said the fireball was probably a meteor, and that it likely disintegrated just before any fragments fell into the Pacific Ocean.

"(I) was driving west through Glenoma on Highway 206 and saw this huge green object coming down in front of us from left to right," said Keith, a viewer who e-mailed us. "It was more awesome that Mt. St. Helens blowing."

Summer Jensen of Portland said she was sitting in her living room with her father when she saw the flash of light outside and rushed to see what it was.

"It was like a big ball of fire" and "behind it was a trail of blue," she said.

"I've never seen anything like that," Jensen said, adding that the object appeared to be moving slowly.

Michael O'Connor, a duty officer at the Federal Aviation Administration's regional office in Renton, Wash., said he fielded "a whole ton of calls" from people reporting they had seen a bright streak across the sky shortly before 8 p.m.

He said police, pilots and some air traffic controllers described it as "a green ball of fire with a long tail."

O'Connor said reports came from as far east as the Tri-Cities area in Washington.

"It appears to have come down over the ocean," said Dick Pugh, with the Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory in Portland.

He said the object flew over the Pacific Coast, streaking along from south to north.

Melinda Hutson, another expert at the lab, said meteors large enough to turn into fireballs are uncommon.



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To get a fireball, it has to be "a big piece of rock or metal - most are pieces of asteroids. Once every once in a while a piece of the moon or Mars breaks off," she said.

Astronomer Jim Todd, planetarium director at the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, said that if the meteor had entered the atmosphere during the daytime, it may not even have be noticed.

"It creates a bright contrast against the night sky," Todd said.

So, we were lucky it came at night.

"My husband and I were out in our hot tub and we were watching the southern sky and... wow! This was no shooting star! We watched it go clear across the sky with a long tail; so bright and amazing to see!" said Stacey in Kingston.

The last time a meteor was reported striking anything on the ground in Oregon - becoming a meteorite - was in May 1981.

But on June 3, a similar meteor streak lit up the Northwestern skies. You can read more from our [komotv.com archives](#)

On March 27, 2003, more than 100 chunks of rock believed to be the remains of a meteor rained down on houses, puncturing roofs and destroying landscaping in Park Forest, Ill., a suburb south of Chicago. No one was injured.

**If you have video or pictures of the meteor please call us at 206-404-4145 or e-mail us: [tips@komo4news.com](mailto:tips@komo4news.com)**

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### **Stepmother Charged In Death Of Sirita Sotelo**

KOMO 4 News has learned that prosecutors have just charged Sirita's stepmother, 25-year-old Heather Ewell, with manslaughter.

### **Ken Schram Commentary: Random Thoughts For Today**

News flash: the governor was joking; ferry food returns, but do we care; and what's with King County thinking of running their own ferries?

### **Homemade Accelerant Used In Church Arson, Investigators Say**

Investigators say whoever set a million dollar fire at the Grace Missionary Baptist Church put a troubling amount of time and effort into planning it.

### **Holiday Wish May Finally Come True For Becerra Family**

Six-month-old Daniel Becerra is one step close to the one thing he needs to survive -- a liver transplant.

### **Bad News For Fish In Lake Sammamish**

Between algae blooms and a potential lack of new water feeding in due to the drought, some fish might run out of food.

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