

A Look Back at 2017

Solar Eclipse, Loveable Baby Hippo Warmed Hearts in 2017

AP looks at the bright spots in a year of tragic and difficult stories

By **AMY FORLITI**
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — It wasn't all doom and gloom in 2017. The year was also filled with awe-inspiring moments that united us and warmed the heart.

The first total solar eclipse to cross the U.S. in a century bought millions together in what some could only describe as a primal experience. Thousands of immigrants took the oath of citizenship, realizing their dreams of becoming Americans. And one adorable baby, Fiona the hippopotamus, became a story of survival as she overcame the odds and tumbled into the world's heart.

The stories provided some lighthearted moments amid a series of deadly mass shootings, terrorist attacks, hurricanes, wildfires, sexual harassment scandals and other tragic news in 2017.

Here's a look at a few of the moving, unifying and just plain fun moments of 2017:

Yay, Science!

It seems nothing brought Americans together more than the

first total solar eclipse to move across the U.S. in a century.

For one moment in the middle of an August day, millions of people stopped what they were doing and gazed upward in wonder as the moon slipped over the sun — leaving a path of total darkness that stretched from Oregon to South Carolina. Some eclipse watchers sang, some danced and some were moved to tears. Kids thought it was pure magic, and people traveled to remote sections of the country to get the best glimpse.

A study by the University of Michigan, requested by NASA, estimated that 215 million American adults — or 88 percent of the country's adult population — viewed the eclipse either directly or electronically. That's 104 million more than the 2017 Super Bowl. "People were really just



In this Sept. 18, 2017 file photo, 35 immigrants from 23 countries recited the Oath of Allegiance, during the naturalization ceremony in Jackson, Miss. It wasn't all doom and gloom in 2017. The year was also filled with awe-inspiring moments that united us and warmed the heart. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 603,825 people became naturalized U.S. citizens in the first nine months of 2017. The ceremonies can be huge moments for those involved.

about nature, about this phenomenon that was happening," said Mamta Patel Nagaraja, who works on public engagement for NASA. "It didn't matter what color, creed, race, economic ladder

“It's Fiona's world, and we're just living in it

you were on, people just went out and enjoyed it.

"It transcended all the other things," she said.

#TEAMFIONA

This little one wasn't expected to make it.

Fiona, a Nile hippopotamus, was just 29 pounds (13 kilograms) when she was born prematurely in January. After early health scares, she's now thriving at more than 600 pounds (272 kilograms). This sassy girl has become a symbol of survival — and the star attraction at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden.

Fiona has captivated the masses and the Team Fiona craze isn't slowing down. She stars in her own internet video series. Tens of millions have gone online to watch her take a bottle, splash in the pool or learn to run. T-shirts bear her image. She's the subject of children's books. An ice cream flavor and local brew are named in her honor. She gets so many cards and letters that she has her own mail bin. Grown men will lean over the pool in their suits and ties to get close to her, said zoo director Thane Maynard.

"It's Fiona's world, and



In this Aug. 21, 2017 file photo, Jack Kvenild, 5, of Laramie, Wyo., watches the eclipse onset at Glendo Reservoir in near Glendo in east-central Wyoming. An economic analysis of last summer's total eclipse found that nearly 192,000 people traveled to Wyoming to view the event. In addition, the study released Monday, Dec. 11 by the state Office of Tourism estimated that the celestial event boosted the state's economy by an estimated \$63.5 million.

we're just living in it," Maynard said.

In her early, most vulnerable days, Fiona received letters and pictures from kids who were preemies themselves, urging her to stay strong. After nurses at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center helped care for the hippo, the zoo sent Fiona-themed onesies to the preemies there.

"We are working with Fiona and her story to spread a number of messages — one is a message of not giving up," Maynard said.

Inspiring Generosity

Out of cash and out of gas on an interstate exit ramp in Philadelphia, Kate McClure found help from an unlikely source: a homeless man who told her to stay put, then used his last \$20 to buy her gas.

Johnny Bobbitt Jr.'s selflessness was not lost on McClure. She set up a GoFundMe page for the military veteran and former paramedic, and raised more than \$400,000.

Now Bobbitt has enough money to buy a home and his dream truck — a 1999 Ford

Ranger. An attorney and financial adviser helped create a plan that will allow him to collect a small monthly salary and have some money for retirement.

Bobbitt has said he's overwhelmed. He told "Good Morning America" he plans to pay the generosity forward by donating some of the money to organizations that will help others.

"Everybody out there is facing some kind of struggle, so if I can touch their life, the way mine was touched, (it'd be) an amazing feeling," he told "Good Morning America."

“Yes!” Over Roast Chicken

From a simple proposal over roast chicken to plans for a royal wedding, news that Prince Harry is engaged to American actress Meghan Markle has many cheering.

The story drew people in for many reasons. For one, it's fun. The happiness exuded by the couple as they announced their engagement was contagious, while details of their courtship read like a fairy tale.

See **POSITIVE** on page 11



Muralist Henry Frison Gets First Solo Show

Local African American painter Henry Frison exhibited close to 20 in his first solo show, which opened at the end of July at greenHAUS Gallery and Boutique. Frison's intimate portraits of iconic Black figures — President Obama, Rosa Parks and Michael Jackson among them — will be on display until the end of summer. At 77, Frison is primarily known as a Portland mural artist and one of seven Black painters that collaborated on the Albina Mural Project from 1978 — a work of five 20 foot by 20 foot murals, spearheaded by artist Isaka Shamsud-Din.

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The Week of
**Friday, Dec. 29 through
Thursday, Jan. 4, 2018**

THE BREADWINNER (PG-13)

Fri-Thur: 2:25, 7:20

ROMAN J. ISRAEL, ESQ. (PG-13)

Fri-Sat, Mon-Thur: 4:40, 9:50
Sun: 4:40

BLADE RUNNER 2049 (R)

Fri-Thur: 1:35, 6:35

THE FLORIDA PROJECT (R)

Fri-Thur: 2:15, 6:50

BATTLE OF THE SEXES (PG-13)

Fri-Sat, Mon-Thur: 11:50, 9:25
Sun: 11:50

LOVING VINCENT (PG-13)

Fri-Thur: 12:10, 4:30

MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO (TONARI NO TOTORO) (G)

Fri-Sat, Mon-Thur: 11:35, 4:50, 9:15
Sun: 11:35, 4:50

\$4.00 adults, \$3.00 senior citizens (65+),
\$3.00 for kids (12 & under)

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Babysitting: Children 2 to 8 years old. Fri: shows starting between 3:30 pm and 8 pm. Sat - Sun: shows starting between 1 pm and 8 pm. \$9.50 per child for the length of the movie. Call to reserve a spot, no drop ins.