

'Podcycle' globetrotter arrives in John Day for eclipse

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

Philip Funnell calls it a "podcycle," with a tiny sleeper-trailer made out of thick foam and fiberglass rigged to the back of his Yamaha 250 motorcycle.

At just five and a half feet long, the homemade camper has barely enough room for Funnell, 80, to stretch his legs. It's not always comfortable, Funnell admits, but he says it has served him well during multiple tours across the globe, spanning more than a million miles and 74 countries since he began riding in 1953.

"It's not tiring for me," he said. "It's an instinctual thing. It's become automatic."

Funnell arrived Saturday in John Day from his home in Chilliwack, British Columbia, where his latest adventure has brought him to experience Monday's total solar eclipse. The moon started crossing the sun at 9:08 a.m. in John Day, with approximately 2 minutes, 6 seconds of totality beginning at 10:22.

Inside his podcycle is everything Funnell needs for the trip — a butane stove and utensils for cooking, spare sweaters, a can of bear spray, a deck of cards to play cribbage and an old cassette tape recorder to take down his thoughts and experiences. Though he has traversed deserts and jungles on his bike, watched the most beautiful sunrise in Costa Rica and met the toughest people in Afghanistan, this will be Funnell's first, and likely only, solar eclipse.

"The light will disappear alarmingly," he anticipated. "And then it's over. And I'll never see another."

Born in South London, Funnell speaks in a soft British accent with an incredible memory for details. His whole life has revolved around motorcycles, and the places they have taken him. He has been around the world twice, including every state, country and territory in North and South America.

Rifling around the back of his podcycle, Funnell finds a bound edition of a book he once self-published, titled "The Sport of Not Getting Tickets." It was written in 1980, when he says he was still going fast.

"I had a reputation for



Philip Funnell, of Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, sits in his pod bike, the "World's Smallest Camper," after arriving on John Day on Saturday. Funnell designed and built his pod bike. It is the third pod bike Funnell has constructed.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris



Philip Funnell, of Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, looks through a book he wrote about motorcycle riding on Saturday in downtown John Day. Funnell rode his pod bike, the "World's Smallest Camper," to John Day to watch the eclipse on Monday.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

fighting these things," he said with a chuckle.

Nowadays, however, Funnell said he prefers a more gentlemanly, low-anxiety style of riding, taking the time to soak in the prairies and Canadian plains.

"When you go through those places slowly and look at the antelope, you learn to appreciate them more, and the journey doesn't seem so long," he said.

Funnell is no stranger to John Day, where he says

he has visited before and greeted every deer that wanders into the small town. He plans to watch the eclipse in the grocery store parking lot before eventually making his way back to Canada.

Funnell has built three

"People have done the most amazing things with motorcycles. Your whole lifestyle goes over to it."

— Philip Funnell, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada

podcycles in his life for these kinds of journeys. The first, he said, was stolen and the second now resides in a BMW motorcycle museum in Maryland. The little trailer, with its all-too-appropriate decal, "Snug as a bug," offers him a place to kick up his feet at the end of a long day.

Funnell said he was attracted to motorcycling at first because they were cheap, and he couldn't afford at the time to buy a

car. Since then, he has been inducted into the Canada Motorcycle Hall of Fame and spent years as a BMW dealer in Canada, where he earned the nickname "Dr. BMW."

"People have done the most amazing things with motorcycles," Funnell said. "Your whole lifestyle goes over to it."

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Crowds gather at Capitol to view eclipse

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — For about two minutes Monday morning, Oregon's capital went dark during the first total solar eclipse to hit the continental U.S. since 1979.

State emergency managers and tourism officials had been prepping for the big event for about a year, though things seemed more subdued in Salem than some had feared.

The event did draw visitors to Salem — the first of five state capitals in the path of totality — from all over the nation and the world.

The crowd front of the state capitol building sported reflective eclipse glasses, telescopes and camera equipment.

Olle Frykstam, 23, came to Salem with a group of other amateur astronomers from his home country, Sweden. At 9 a.m., just over an hour before the sun was due to be obscured, Frykstam said, "I hope for total darkness."

He got his wish.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown hosted a group of Girl Scouts from Salem and Woodburn and other guests — ranging from the state forester to the secretary of state — for a morning eclipse viewing party on a terrace outside her ceremonial office.

Brown said guests had converged on the capitol terrace from places as far-flung as Chile, Peru and "the state south of Oregon."

After she was presented with a special commemorative stamp, Brown and her



Observers of the total solar eclipse gathered on the Oregon Capitol Mall Monday.

Claire Withycombe/Capital Bureau



Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a former Campfire Girl, chats with Girl Scouts at the Oregon Capitol before the total solar eclipse Monday morning.

Claire Withycombe/Capital Bureau

guests took in the eclipse. Things grew quiet as the air cooled and the moon began to obscure more of

the sun.

During the event itself, though, crowds at the Capitol Mall and nearby Willamette University could be heard making noise. The Girl Scouts screamed.

"The sun is winning!" said Secretary of State Dennis Richardson as the moon continued its journey. People applauded and cheered after the darkness lifted.

Afterward, Brown appeared in awe.

"It is a euphoric feeling," Brown said. "It was absolutely stunning. There is no way to describe it in words."

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