

WAITING FOR DARKNESS: the Eclipse of Polk County 2017

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The Itemizer-Observer

Organizations, cities and businesses have been meeting for months — some as early as 2015 — in anticipation of the Great American Eclipse. The event is a once-in-a-lifetime for many, and certainly for those living in Polk County.

It gives us a chance to see a rare celestial event literally from our own backyard.

Because we have such a good view with historically clear skies, chances are good that we will be joined by many visitors from around the state — and the world — to take in the view. While it's difficult to impossible to know how many people will come, Travel Salem has estimated tens of thousands of tourists to the Marion-Polk area.

Polk County vineyards are planning large public and private parties for the event. Cities are deciding how best to use public spaces to accommodate tourists the week before the eclipse as well as the weekend of the eclipse. Businesses are coming together to discuss how best to provide services to out-of-towners as well as make a few extra bucks.

The opportunity for an economic boost is palpable and exciting — but it's difficult to tell how real it is. Understandably, events being planned around the Great American Eclipse are at different stages. How much time, effort and money should go into getting ready for an event that will take less than 2 minutes?

We have compiled what we know about events happening in Polk County. Some of these events should be booked now if you're interested in going — we expect them to sell out soon. Some haven't completely materialized, while others have a few kinks and fine tuning to work out still.

The *Itemizer-Observer* will publish a special souvenir edition to honor the Great American Eclipse, available at the Polk County Fair on Aug. 10 through 12, which will have more details about events in the area. Our reporters and staff will be scattered throughout Polk County on the morning of Aug. 21 to tell the story of the eclipse, with special coverage available on Aug. 23 in the newspaper.

If you are planning an event for the Great American Eclipse, let us know by sending an email to ionews@polkio.com, with Eclipse in the subject line.

Baily's Beads — the effect of sunlight shining on the moon's terrain just before and after totality in a total solar eclipse, creating bright points of light at the edge of the moon's disk. **Corona** — the outer atmosphere of the sun that is visible during a total eclipse as a white ring around the sun. **Diamond ring** — A burst of sunlight that shines like a diamond on a ring, seen right before totality begins and as it ends. **First contact** — When the partial phase of the eclipse begins. **Penumbra** — The lighter part of the moon's shadow. We stand in the moon's penumbral shadow during the partial phases of a solar eclipse. **Shadow bands** — Faint, wavy bands caused by the bending of light in the Earth's atmosphere that move across the ground right before and after totality. **Totality** — When the moon completely blocks the sun from view and casts a shadow on the Earth. **Umbra** — the darkest part of the moon's shadow, seen when the moon completely obscures the sun during a total solar eclipse. **Umbraphile** — A person who loves eclipses and will travel anywhere to see them. Source: "The Big Eclipse" by Nancy Coffelt.

You have your spot chosen. You have the camera ready. When the eclipse arrives, you can simply look to the sky, right? Wrong. Doing so could have dire consequences. It's never safe to look directly at the sun. Unfiltered sunlight will damage eyes and could cause permanent blindness. Just because there will be an eclipse doesn't change that fact. Normal sunglasses will not provide sufficient protection. To view the eclipse safely, use only approved solar filters ("eclipse glasses" or welders' goggles rated 14 or higher). Don't have either one? Eclipse glasses will likely be widely available in the months leading up to the eclipse. But if you don't have either one, there are other ways to view the eclipse. Telescopes, cameras and binoculars with approved solar filters can be used to safely view the big event. A pinhole project (a card with a small hole punched in it will project an image of the sun) can also be utilized.



ECLIPSE TRAVEL TIPS FROM THE ODOT

Help keep roads clear. Staying off the roads helps emergency vehicles get through. Ride your bicycle when possible. **Travel with friends.** Joining friends and family for the trip to totality will reduce the number of cars on the road. Find carpool information at www.drivelessconnect.com. **Meet your needs in advance.** Take care of those errands before Aug. 21. Limit your trips in the days immediately around the eclipse to help keep roads clear. **Be prepared.** If you're traveling, plan for basic needs such as food, water and bathroom breaks. **Expect traffic changes.** Communities may close streets to through traffic or ban left or right turns to keep traffic moving, especially around large events. **Caution friends and family:** If visitors are coming, warn them to arrive early, stay put during the eclipse, and leave late afterwards so everyone doesn't jump on the highways at once. **Consider working from home.** Consider adjusting your work schedule in the days around the eclipse. To help alleviate congestion on the roads, Oregon Department of Transportation will stop all construction and non-emergency maintenance on state highways in the path of totality on Aug. 18-22, when eclipse watchers are here.

MANY WAITING YEARS for these few dark moments

On Feb. 26, 1979, it was overcast in the Pacific Northwest. That was the last time a total solar eclipse darkened the skies over Oregon.

It was visible in total in Northern Oregon, Southern Washington and parts of Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and Canada. Totality in the Portland area was around 8:15 a.m.

Salem resident Nick Liepins said "druids" enhanced his viewing experience of the 1979 solar eclipse.

He watched and took photos of the event in Washington, just across the Columbia River from Biggs, Ore. He took photos at Stonehenge replica where a pagan group was gathered to watch and celebrate the eclipse.

It was cloudy there just moments before the eclipse. Whether it be coincidence or spiritual intervention, Liepins said the sky cleared as the groups chants got louder and he could see and photograph the eclipse without cloud cover.

Nancy Coffelt, then living in Tigard, was in still in high school.

Coffelt describes herself as a "kind of a science geek," so the rare total eclipse held a fascination for her.

"I know it was a school day, I was a senior in high school, but I don't remember if I had permission to skip or not," Coffelt said.

Overcast skies did take some of the visual spectacle out of the eclipse, but Coffelt still was impressed. During an eclipse, as the sky darkens, the temperature drops, and animals behave as if the sun is going down.

"It did get noticeably darker," she said. "Since it was February, it was already kind of chilly, so I don't remember much of a temperature drop. But the birds did get quiet. That was very cool... I remember that it looked like what the sky looked like just before sunrise — a kind of dark silver."

Pat Jarrott was climbing to 14,000 feet during the last total solar eclipse seen in the Willamette Valley.

Jarrott was flying small airplane on the morning of Feb. 26, 1979. He and a photographer friend planned for an aerial view of the eclipse to avoid the cloud cover that threatened to block it for ground locations.

He flew around until he found a break in the clouds over Forest Grove.

Jarrott, of Keizer, had a camera, but had to pilot the plane, so his friend would adjust the settings of the camera for him to shoot without looking.

"It was fun and hectic for a few minutes," Jarrott said.

Monmouth resident David Kasnick was 14 in 1979 and watched the eclipse from an observatory in Goldendale, Washington along with many other astronomy enthusiasts. Partly cloudy skies that morning, didn't allow him to see the entire event. It was still an experience that began a lifelong interest in sky watching and eclipses.

He said Oregonians should feel fortunate that solar eclipses 38 years apart have tracked over Oregon.

"I feel pretty lucky," he said.

Witnessing the eclipse made a lasting impression for Coffelt, too.

"I was awestruck," she said. "It changed how I looked at the world around me — the universe around me," Coffelt said. "It sparked a love of space science that included writing about space."

Coffelt is the author and illustrator of children's space-themed books "Dogs in Space," published in 1993 and the 1999 follow-up "Dogs in Space, the Great Space Doghouse."

Coffelt teamed up with Elaine Cuyler, the "chief eclipse officer" who is promoting the upcoming the Aug. 21 eclipse in the regions of the country on the path of totality. They published a Coffelt's third children's science book, "The Big Eclipse."

Those who witnessed the 1979 eclipse are eager to see what Aug. 21 has in store.

Coffelt is looking forward to seeing the eclipse from a hilltop in her hometown of Baker City, which is on the path of totality. The stronger possibility of clear skies in eastern Oregon gives her a chance to see what she missed during the 1979 eclipse.

"I look forward to seeing the sun disappear and the diamond ring effect just before totality," she said.

Jarrott will be on the ground this time, watching from his home in Keizer. Kasnick is hoping for good conditions.

"Whatever god you believe in, pray for clear skies," he said.

Liepins was watching and taking pictures and video on Aug. 21 from his backyard observatory and thought if the druid chants worked once, they might work a second time.

"I'm looking around for some of them to help with the weather in August," he said.

'Dark Side of the Moon' in Monmouth

Monmouth will be celebrating with a concert fit for a solar eclipse, "The Dark Side of the Moon" on Sunday evening to put everyone in the spirit for the big event the next day. Monmouth Business Association and the city of Monmouth are presenting the outdoor concert at the Main Street Park Amphitheater. Pink Floyd tribute band Pigs on the Wing will play Dark Side of the Moon in its entirety — plus other Pink Floyd favorites. The concert is free.

Indy ready to 'Go Dark'

The city of Independence is ready to host as many visitors and residents as can be packed into the downtown area with its Indy Goes Dark Eclipse Festival, Aug. 17 through 21. Grab your blanket and head out to the Riverview Park to kick off the five-day festival on Aug. 17 and enjoy a space-themed movie for free. On Aug. 18, the concert in the park featuring Aeromyth Pump, an Aerosmith tribute band. Aug. 19, Indy Goes Dark will feature a Food Truck and Brew Fest, offering beer and cider from 20 different brewers and cider houses from all over Oregon. A 5-kilometer fun run, sponsored by Monmouth-Independence Networks, will raise money for AED devices for places who need them. Live concerts will be throughout the day, ending with Pyromania, a Def Leppard tribute band. Additionally, there will be inflatables, science demonstrations, interactive shows and telescopes. Fireworks will light up the sky after dark.

Sunday, you can start the morning with a bike ride through Polk County, or yoga in Riverview Park. Food trucks will open again at 12:30 p.m. Live shows, science demonstrations and an evening concert also dot the schedule, topped with more fireworks.

Sunday evening, a pay-to-play special edition Ghost Walk will be offered at three times: 5, 6 and 7 p.m. The walk will cost \$10 for adults.

Monday, Aug. 21, breakfast will be available for purchase in the park. Dr. Shimizu from Western Oregon University will explain the total solar eclipse at first contact. A post-eclipse concert will wrap up the event and keep people entertained while waiting for traffic to clear a bit.

For information: independencegoedark.com.

Dallas Eclipse on the Square

Dallas Eclipse Celebration on the Square will be from Aug. 18 to eclipse day Aug. 21, hosted by the Dallas Downtown Association, Dallas Area Visitors Center, Pressed Coffee & Wine Bar, Dallas Arts Association, the city of Dallas, and other downtown businesses.

The kickoff party is Aug. 18 at 7 p.m. when vendor and food booths open downtown. Live music begins at 8 p.m. with Barracuda, All Fired Up and Madd Company (Heart, Pat Benatar, and Bad Company cover bands). Food vendors and wine and beer garden are open until 1 a.m.

Aug. 19 and 20, the festival opens at 10 a.m. with vendors and daytime music. Pigs on the Wing (Pink Floyd cover band) plays at 8 p.m. on Aug. 19. Aug. 20, Steelhorse and Jukebox Heroes (Bon Jovi and Foreigner) are featured starting at 8 p.m. Food vendors and wine and beer garden are open until 1 a.m. both nights.

On eclipse day, Jan Looking Wolf Band of Brothers will play from the roof of Pressed Coffee & Wine bar starting at 8 a.m. Vendors, food vendors and beer/wine garden open until 2 p.m. For information: <https://dallaseclipse2017.com/>.

Falls City joins the eclipse party

Details are still being hammered out, but Falls City is planning an event for the morning of Aug. 21. Organizer Laurie Britton said the plan is to shut down Third Street and hold a community breakfast starting at 6 a.m. and eclipse watching gathering continuing through the morning. Viewing glasses will be available.

The event concludes at noon.

dallastlc.org/eclipse to make your reservation and answer your questions about hookups, pets and length of stay. If you have more questions, please send an email to dallaseclipse@gmail.com or call 1-503-623-2233.', 'Welcome to Dallas, Oregon!'."/>