

## Meet those who traveled here for this awesome experience



Eagle photos/Rylan Boggs

### Wind, left, Leslie and Miles Lothamer

Wind Lothamer, from Portland, said he wasn't prepared for how awe-inspiring the eclipse would be to see in person.

"You look at pictures, and you have an idea of what it's going to look like, but just seeing it in person is just crazy, wild," he said. "I didn't think it would be as impressive, I guess."

He also found relief the event didn't signal the apocalypse.

"The world didn't end, so that's plus," he said.

Leslie Lothamer said the totality was her favorite part and, during it, she was so cold she had to put on a jacket in the middle of a hot August day.

"I liked that everyone was cheering for it," she said. "It was a fun place to see it. It's neat in the crowd when people are excited about it."

Totality was unlike anything she had seen.

"That was definitely one of the coolest things I've ever seen," she said.



Caitlin Heath



Robert Bakewell

Caitlin Heath, from Pendleton, described the eclipse as "phenomenal" and "worth it."

"A lot of people in Pendleton were like 'we've got 96 percent, good enough,'" she said. However, Heath wanted to view the eclipse without glasses and so came to John Day.

She said one of her favorite aspects was seeing the sun set all around the horizon and watching a wall of shadow created by the moon move across the valley.

"One minute it was there, and the next minute it was here," she said.

She also enjoyed being surrounded by campers who had high-tech telescopes and camera equipment.

Robert Bakewell traveled to John Day from San Francisco.

He experienced his first eclipse in 1964 but said it rained the whole time. After that he promised himself he would see another one. On Monday, he got his chance.

He said what he enjoyed most about the trip was the people he met in camp.

"The people are terrific. We've got Italians, we've got Canadians, we've got Americans, we've got some English, people from Japan, Spain — it's a real international crowd with a lot of families," he said.

His group passed the time by telling stories, sharing food and wine and enjoying the young folk playing.

"It's like a mini Burning Man without the late-night drinking," Bakewell said.



Patty Sprunk and Eric Sprunk

Eric Sprunk, from Carlsbad, California, saw his first eclipse when he was 12. At the time, he didn't know what was going on.

"I thought I was going blind or something," he said.

Since then, he has come to understand and appreciate eclipses.

"There's no words that describe it. It's just a natural phenomenon, and you just never see anything like it," he said. "Basically, a hole opens up in the sky right on top of the sun."

This is the fourth solar eclipse he has viewed, and he still feels humbled by them.

"You look up, and you see something that big, you should feel small because it points out that you are," he said.



From left, Ruth, Adrienne, Ted and Evan Stern

Ruth Stern, from Seattle, said she most enjoyed the mix of technology used to view the eclipse. Her family used a spaghetti colander to view the eclipse. All the holes in the colander created crescent-shaped shadows mimicking the eclipse.

Their neighbors at the Industrial Park had a large telescope hooked up to a laptop and were more than happy to let the Sterns family view.

"It's just such an awesome thing to do with your family," Stern said.



Eileen Poxon and Dick Williams

Eileen Poxon's favorite aspect of the eclipse was the rays of light that came off during totality.

"We came to John Day to share a moment with a lot of people across the earth, and it was absolutely stunning, spectacular," she said. "The contrast of the planets, the ring and the light emitted from it made you feel like you were in a different space and time."

## 'Podcycle' globetrotter cruises into John Day

By George Plaven  
EO Media Group

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 5.5 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.

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 said he has traversed deserts and jungles on his bike, watched the most beautiful sunrise in Costa Rica and met the



EO Media Group photos/E.J. Harris

**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.**

toughest people in Afghanistan, this will be Funnell's first, and likely only, solar eclipse.

"The light will disappear alarmingly," he anticipates, "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-pub-

lished, 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 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 Canada 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



**Philip Funnell of Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, has traveled all over the world riding motorcycles.**

plans to watch the eclipse in the grocery store parking lot before eventually making his way back to Canada.

Funnell has built three 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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According to travelers, it was well worth the trip.

Mike Ziemke, of Merrill, Wisconsin, drove two full days to John Day where he met his friend, Chuck Stewart, of Vancouver, Washington. The two astronomy buffs settled in Wednesday and spent every night stargazing through their telescopes and eagerly awaiting Monday's eclipse.

Ziemke, who watched the 1979 total solar eclipse from his home in Wisconsin, described the experience as life-changing.

"It's something that's just unbelievable," he said. "To think of all the people across the country coming together today, just to watch ... you've got all walks of life."

Kevin Knowles, an astronomy teacher at Mount Si High School in Snoqualmie, Washington, wore his enthusiasm on his sleeve — literally — with not one but two shirts adorned in planets and galaxies. He said he first heard about the eclipse in March while attending the National Science Teachers Association conference in Los Angeles, and made his arrangements.

"I would have loved to have this a few weeks later so I could have brought my whole class," Knowles said. "Definitely, this brings alive everything I teach."

For others, traveling to the path of totality was a last-minute decision. Patricia Johnson, of Sacramento, California, drove up to Oregon with her adult son, Edek Sher, who was home visiting from Rhode Island.

The two were not able to find eclipse glasses on such short notice anywhere in northern California. Fortunately, they were able to stop at the Powerhouse Science Center in Sacramento, where they learned how to make their own using paper, Popsicle sticks and decorated with crayons. The center also provided the proper viewing lenses.

"We were embarrassed," Johnson said with a smile. "But we wanted to come prepared."

A number of visitors traveled not just cross-country but across an ocean to see the uniquely North American event. Bart Verbrugge and his wife, Véronique, came all the way from their native Holland with their two children, Isabel, 11, and Jurien, 9.

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creating a film, but to allow detail of the sun's corona for astronomers to study.

Smith said she was glad her team of students met a few times to practice with the telescope, fitted with a camera connected to a laptop.

"The data we collected is awesome, and the totality was so much more intense than I expected," she said. "Many thanks to Tom Schad and the National Solar Observatory for giving us this training and opportunity."

Smith said a bonus to their

involvement in the program is keeping the equipment, and free software, to use at school.

Brandon's experience cemented his thoughts about pursuing a career that involves astronomy.

"With such a beautiful, once-in-a-lifetime event, I think it's convinced me this is the kind of thing I want to do with my life," he said.

Donavan Smith said he was just about brought to tears at the sight of the eclipse.

"I'm amazed that John Day just happens to be in the middle of the path of totality," he said.

Allen said the experience was beyond his expectations.

"I feel lucky and blessed, and unbelievably sad that I won't be seeing it again in my lifetime," he said.

"The light quality (as the sunlight faded) reminded everyone of looking at old sepia photographs," Sonna Smith said.

During totality, the darkness was much like what one would see around 8 p.m.

Horses on the property became active, running around, the teacher said.

The group recorded the temperature for NASA every 10 minutes, an hour before and an hour

after the partial phases.

Air temperature dropped 11-12 degrees Fahrenheit and ground temperature fell 40 degrees.

Sonna Smith said they noticed shadows changing.

"Pre-eclipse shadows were sharp on the right edge and blurry on the left," she said. "Post eclipse it was reversed."

Jensen, now a Lane Community College student, said she feels fortunate to have been a part of the event.

"I always thought this town wouldn't be able to provide any opportunity for me to test the waters of astronomy, and I'm glad I was wrong," she said.



EO Media Group photos/E.J. Harris

**Thousands of travelers gathered at the industrial park in John Day on Monday to view the eclipse.**



**Traffic clogs Highway 26 in downtown John Day as eclipse travelers make their way home on Monday.**



**Gabriel Porter, of Sandy, right, reacts to the start of the eclipse while watching it with his twin brother, Nathan, on Monday in John Day.**



**Kevin Knowles, an astronomy teacher at Mount Si High School in Washington, sports a pair of celestial shirts while viewing the eclipse in John Day.**

"It's like some special kind of gray darkness," Schatzman explained. "At the same time, the sun gets this silvery kind of shine."

After totality, some at the industrial park decided to stay while others hit the road right away. Worries of severe traffic backups were perhaps overblown, according to

Tom Strandberg with the Oregon Department of Transportation, who said only minor delays were reported along highways 395 and 26.

"It's actually been a lot calmer than we anticipated," he said. "People seem to be behaving, for the most part."

The United States will not experience another total solar eclipse until 2024, and Oregon will not see another until 2108, when one is expected to graze along the coast.