

Alfred University students, alum, professors heading for total eclipse of the sun

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2015 partial eclipse watchers
in Belfast, Ireland, courtesy of
EartSky

Three Alfred University astronomers and physics professors are leading a trip to Union, Mo., where the total solar eclipse of Aug. 21 will be on full display.

Physics professors David Toot, David DeGraff and Georgina Bernstein-Kendall depart Saturday in two Alfred University vans, along with Professor of Anthropology Robert Myers and Visiting Assistant Professor of Art Foundations Sara Ferguson. They will be joined by Alfred University alumnus Ben Placek '10, AU students, plus spouses/family members.

The group returns to Alfred on Aug. 22, the day after the full eclipse sweeps across the United States, from Oregon to South Carolina.

DeGraff notes the eclipse will begin in the Alfred area at 1:15 p.m. Monday, with the full eclipse peaking at 2:34 p.m. and the eclipse ending at 3:54 p.m.

The safest way to watch the eclipse is through a pair of sunglasses rated for the full protection necessary. Warning: Do not take chances with a pair of sunglasses not specifically rated for full solar eclipse protection. Permanent eye damage may occur.

In the absence of proper eye protection, Toot recommends construction of a simple pinhole projector, which will invert the image of the sun and provide a full illustration of the eclipse. #14 welding glasses are another possibility. Local libraries may also have a supply of eclipse glass in stock.

DeGraff says another common way of watching a solar eclipse is in the woods. Leaves on trees may act as pinholes, projecting multiple images of the eclipsed sun on the ground.

He adds that as the sky darkens — the Alfred area will experience a more-than 50-percent eclipse of the sun — birds may begin roosting in trees.

Check out cool designs for pinhole projectors:

<https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/how-make-pinhole-projector-view-solar-eclipse>

<https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/make-pinhole-projector.html>