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Solar show

Visitors pass through Montgomery, Fulton counties for eclipse

BY ASHLEY ONYON

AMSTERDAM — Streetlights came on several hours early in Amsterdam on the Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook Pedestrian Bridge as the solar eclipse neared its peak.

"It was cool. It got dark at daytime, we've never seen that," said Lilianna, 9, of Scotia.

She and her family were among the dozens of area locals gathered at the MVGO Bridge in Amsterdam to watch the eclipse despite cloudy conditions on Monday afternoon.

As the clouds shifted,

families would periodically exclaim, "you can see a little orange now" and other similar phrases of excitement as they peered into the sky through eclipse glasses.

"We could see every step up until the end. It was cloudy on and off, but still really cool," Jennifer Sawicki said. She was there with her husband, Chris, and son, Landon.

The couple probably would have kept their sixth-grader home from school for the once-in-a-lifetime experience had the Greater Amsterdam School District not closed

See **ECLIPSE**, Page A2



PETER R. BARBER

The beginning of the eclipse Monday.

The Leader-Herald

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Total solar eclipse races across North America

BY MARCIA DUNN

MESQUITE, Texas (AP) — A chilly, midday darkness fell across North America on Monday as a total solar eclipse raced across the continent, thrilling those lucky enough to behold the spectacle through clear skies.

Street lights blinked on and the planets came into view, as the moon shrouded the sun for a few minutes across the land. Dogs howled, frogs croaked and some people wept, all part of the eclipse mania gripping Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.

Almost everyone in North America could see at least a partial eclipse, weather permitting.

It was the continent's biggest eclipse audience ever, with a couple hundred million people living in or near the shadow's path, plus scores of out-of-towners flocking in to see it. With the next coast-to-coast eclipse 21 years out, the pressure was on to catch this one.

Clouds blanketed most of Texas as the total solar eclipse began its diagonal dash across land, starting along Mexico's mostly clear Pacific coast and aiming for Texas and 14 other U.S. states, before exiting into the North Atlantic near Newfoundland.

In Georgetown, Texas, the skies cleared just in time to give spectators a clear view. In other spots, the eclipse played peek-a-boo with the clouds.

"We are really lucky," said Georgetown resident Susan Robertson. "Even with the clouds it is kind of nice, because when it clears up, it is like, Wow!"



MATT ROURKE

People gather to watch the total solar eclipse from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Monday.

"I will never unsee this," said Ahmed Hussein of Austin, who had the eclipse on his calendar for a year.

Just east of Dallas, the hundreds gathered at Mesquite's downtown area cheered and whistled as the clouds parted in the final minutes before totality. As the sun finally be-

came cloaked, the crowd grew louder, whipping off their eclipse glasses to soak in the unforgettable view of the sun's corona, or spiky outer atmosphere, and Venus shining brilliantly off to the right.

Going into Monday's spectacle, northern New England into Canada

had the best chances of clear skies, and that didn't change. Holly Randall, who watched from Colebrook, New Hampshire, said experiencing the eclipse was beyond her expectations.

"I didn't expect to cry when I saw it," she said, as tears ran down her

See **SOLAR**, Page A2

BROADALBIN

Officials seek to get 'gears rolling' on new town barn

BY TYLER A. MCNEIL

BROADALBIN — Discussions over replacing Broadalbin's antiquated highway garage have been ongoing for at least one-third of the building's past.

Sandra Thompson has been working for the town for 22 years.

"As long as I've been here, it's been a topic of conversation, but it's a lot of money to build a building," she said.

Now in her first term as town highway superintendent, Thompson hopes to work with town officials to eventually demolish the eyesore and rebuild a barn on the same Union Mills Road property.

Among lingering facility concerns, the lighting is dim. The space is too tight for Broadalbin's 10-wheeler fleet. Heat easily escapes the building.

Thompson, who was elected last year, believes that the site is beyond repair. Even an LED swap made within recent years doesn't address long-term lighting challenges, the Republican noted.

"It's just not efficient," Thompson said. "I honestly wouldn't put money into it."

Broadalbin Town Supervisor Joseph DiGiacomo shares daylight with Thompson's capital ambitions. He's confident that the board could begin the process of moving toward replacement.



TYLER A. MCNEIL

Broadalbin Supervisor Joseph DiGiacomo at a town meeting on March 12.

"We're going to get the gears rolling, but it's not going to happen this year, I don't think," DiGiacomo said. "That's our plan."

The town briefly considered using COVID-19 relief (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to build an addition onto the building to address spatial concerns. After learning that the project would cost \$400,000, offi-

cials scrapped the idea and decided to start from scratch, according to DiGiacomo.

While expected to be pricey, DiGiacomo believes that it's possible to get a new highway garage, by tapping the municipality's fund balance and ARPA funds, in addition to bonding.

"Even if it's a million or a million and a half to build a new building,

we'll be further ahead," DiGiacomo said.

Under the administration of then-Supervisor Lewis Baldwin, the current highway garage was designed by Schenectady-based architect Harris Sanders and completed in fall of 1963, according to newspaper records.

The project was approved, 300 to 247, through a permissive referendum the previous year. Costs were set not to exceed \$35,000.

"I wish we could do it for that right now," DiGiacomo said.

This year marks DiGiacomo's second tenure as town supervisor in Broadalbin. During his last run in office from 2009 to 2013, DiGiacomo was frequently at odds with then-Highway Superintendent Lance Winney.

At one point, DiGiacomo accused Winney of exceeding his authority by cutting down trees behind the town barn — which the highway superintendent disputed. Winney told the Daily Gazette at the time that he was trying to stop runoff from entering the garage lunch room.

"The town barn is falling down," Winney said in 2012. "It is disgusting."

DiGiacomo was ultimately booted from office against a challenge from Thomas Christopher in 2013, who said before the election that the highway garage "needs to be replaced in the next few years."

INSIDE



Biden promotes 'life-changing' student loan relief

PAGE A6

INDEX

Annie/Horoscope	B8
Comics	A7
Community Notes	A4
National	A6
Obituaries	A6
Sports	B1-5

WEATHER



Mostly sunny.
High 72/Low 44

PAGE A2



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SEVEN DAY FORECAST FOR CAPITAL REGION

Tuesday	Tue. night	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
High 74	Low 45	58/51	61/56	64/45	49/41	61/49	70/45
RealFeel: 76/42		RF: 58	RF: 53	RF: 61	RF: 43	RF: 64	RF: 79

The AccuWeather RealFeel Temperature™ (RF) is an exclusive index of effective temperature based on eight weather factors. Shown are the highest values of the day.

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Monday's Almanac

Temperatures		Precipitation	
High/low	68/28	24-hour total	0.00"
Normal high/low	56/34	Month to date	1.17"
Last year high/low	52/28	Normal month to date	0.80"
Record high	88 in 1929	Year to date	13.06"
Record low	19 in 2018	Normal year to date	8.87"

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather.com** ©2024

TOWN OF AMSTERDAM

Chunky Boy Yarn Shop closing after less than a year

BY ASHLEY ONYON

The Chunky Boy Yarn Shop is shutting down after less than a year operating in the Polar Plaza on Route 30.

"We have so enjoyed being a part of the community and will miss you all," read a sign on an interior window inside a locked entrance vestibule at the store on Monday.

Another posted "FAQ" sign attributed the closure to insufficient depth of market and community support despite the best efforts of owner Beth Ressel.

"I threw everything I had at making this shop work," the sign reads. "I appreciate all of you who gave us your business while we were here so, so much."

The store was to remain open until inventory was liquidated, but no specific hours were posted at the shop or on its Facebook page.

It's unclear if the shop has already closed its doors for good. A Google business profile lists the yarn store as permanently closed.

Multiple attempts to contact the Chunky Boy Yarn Shop for comment for this story were not returned.

Ressel opened the shop with supplies for knitting, crocheting and other needlework in October.

The space also housed production of the patented Chunky Boy craft handle created by Ressel.

Production of the ergonomic silicone handle to comfortably hold hooks for crocheting and other nee-

dlework will continue and expand despite the closure of the yarn shop, according to a recent Facebook post.

"For those of you who have fallen in love with the Chunky Boy craft handle, that portion of my business isn't going away and will actually be growing this year," the post reads.

In January, Ressel said manufacturing of the craft handle would be moving off-site this year to a subcontractor outside of Albany in order to increase production.

The craft handles sold in the store and online would often sell out within 10 minutes of being restocked, Ressel previously said.

Reach Ashley Onyon at aonyon@dailygazette.net or [@AshleyOnyon](https://www.facebook.com/AshleyOnyon) on X.



ASHLEY ONYON

The Chunky Boy Yarn Shop in the Polar Plaza on Route 30 in the town of Amsterdam is closing. The exterior of the shop is shown on Monday.

Solar

Continued from page A1

The show got underway in the Pacific before noon. As the darkness of totality reached the Mexican resort city of Mazatlán, the faces of spectators were illuminated only by the screens of their cellphones.

The cliff-hanging uncertainty of the weather added to the drama. But the morning's overcast skies in Mesquite didn't rattle Erin Froneberger, who was in town for business and brought along her eclipse glasses.

"We are always just rushing, rushing, rushing," she said. "But this is an event that we can just take a moment, a few seconds that it's going to happen and embrace it."

A festival outside Austin wrapped up early on Monday because of the threat of afternoon storms. Festival organizers urged everyone to pack up and leave.

Eclipse spectators at Niagara Falls State Park had to settle

for darkness, but no stunning corona views. As people made their way out of the park a little more than an hour later, the sun broke through.

"I'd give it a 6 out of 10," said Haleigh Thibodeau, who traveled from Buxton, Maine, with her mother.

In Rushville, Indiana, the street lights lit up as darkness fell, drawing cheers and applause from residents gathered on porches and sidewalks.

For some, eclipse day was also their wedding day.

Couples exchanged vows in a mass ceremony at a park in Trenton, Ohio.

St. Louis was just outside totality, but that didn't stop residents from taking in the scene from the Mississippi River aboard the Tom Sawyer, a paddlewheel riverboat.

"I almost enjoyed it a little bit more because it didn't go black," said passenger Jeff Smith of St. Louis.

During Monday's full eclipse, the moon slipped right in front of the sun, entirely blocking it. The resulting twilight, with only the sun's outer atmosphere or

corona visible, was long enough for birds and other animals to fall silent, and for planets and stars to pop out.

At the Fort Worth Zoo, Adam Hartstone-Rose, a researcher from North Carolina State University, said most animals remained relatively calm. One gorilla climbed atop a pole and stood there for several seconds, likely a sign of vigilance.

"Nobody was doing sort of bonkers behavior," he said.

The out-of-sync darkness lasted up to 4 minutes, 28 seconds. That's almost twice as long as it was during the U.S. coast-to-coast eclipse seven years ago because the moon was closer to Earth.

It took just 1 hour, 40 minutes for the moon's shadow to race more than 4,000 miles across the continent.

The path of totality — approximately 115 miles wide — encompassed several major cities this time, including Dallas; Indianapolis; Cleveland; Buffalo, New York; and Montreal. An estimated 44 million people live within the track, with a couple hundred million more within 200 miles.

Eclipse

Continued from page A1

schools for the eclipse.

"I wanted him to experience it and he'd be on the bus right now," Jennifer Sawicki said.

Tara Holcomb brought her kids, Conner, 13 and Emmaleena, 8, to the bridge hoping the wide-open space would offer a better viewing experience than they would have from their home in Amsterdam.

The family said the sun gradually blocked by the moon reminded them of the Cheshire Cat from "Alice in Wonderland."

"It's something you don't see everyday," Tara Holcomb said.

Although the roughly 98% coverage in the city didn't bring the dramatic effect Conner Holcomb was hoping for, he and his sister agreed it was a worthwhile experience.

The gathering on the bridge was prompted by a Facebook event created by 4th Ward Alderman Christopher Carpenter.

"I love gatherings. Anything to bring people together is always a good thing," Carpenter said, overjoyed at being surrounded by families with kids and pets roaming around.

Mayor Michael Cinquanti was among those at the bridge after closing City Hall at 2 p.m. to ensure non-essential staff had the chance to see the eclipse.

"It's something you'll always remember," Cinquanti said. "I just wish the clouds cooperated a little bit better."

A water main break on the South Side required the attention of water department staff into the afternoon. A boil water advisory was in effect following the restoration of water service.

Other watch parties were held at Rug City Bar and Lounge in Amsterdam, Great Sacandaga Brewing Compa-



ASHLEY ONYON

Locals view the solar eclipse from the Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook Pedestrian Bridge in Amsterdam on Monday.

ny in Broadalbin, Stump City Brewing in Gloversville and Northville Public Library in Northville.

In the hours before the eclipse, Carla Kolbe said traffic was flowing smoothly through the Vails Mills roundabout at Route 29 and 30 outside the Fulton County Visitor Center.

"Everybody is curious and excited. It's a beautiful day here," said Kolbe, tourism coordinator for Fulton County.

Still, Kolbe said traffic heading north on Route 30 towards the Adirondacks was a little higher than usual for this time of year.

"I have a lot of traffic of people searching for eclipse glasses," she added.

A variety of travelers and locals stopped by or called the visitor center searching at the last minute for the filtered glasses to safely view the phenomenon.

Anne Boles, executive director of the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, said local supplies had largely run out by the day of the eclipse.

"The businesses who invested in glasses are all sold out. The libraries and schools have helped families take advantage of this once in a lifetime viewing of the eclipse," Boles said. Libraries in Amsterdam, Canajoharie, Fonda, Gloversville, Johnstown and Northville had all run out by the day of the eclipse.

Many area schools were closed on Monday to avoid traffic issues related to the eclipse starting around dismissal time, while ensuring students and

families could experience it. "It's a great opportunity for us to view the eclipse. I think we really lucked out with the weather," Boles said.

While full details on the impact of the eclipse on local tourism were not immediately available, Boles and Kolbe said hotels saw an increase in bookings in Fulton County.

"People were coming in for the eclipse," Kolbe said.

Historic Hotel Broadalbin was fully booked. Occupancy at the Holiday Inn in Johnstown was up around 60%. The Inn at the Bridge in Northville had only two vacancies.

Paul McAvoy estimated three to four times the number of regular visitors passed through the Mohawk Valley Welcome Center on the state Thruway between Fonda and Canajoharie.

"We have seen a big uptick in the number of visitors to the welcome center, especially this past weekend," said McAvoy, spokesperson for Liberty ARC.

Liberty ARC operates the welcome center at Erie Canal Lock 13 for Taste NY and the NY Thruway Authority.

Many visitors to the rest stop were reportedly traveling west towards communities in the path of totality, such as Rochester and Buffalo.

"Lots of people are traveling from many states to see the eclipse," McAvoy said. "There has been a buzz and excitement around it."

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