Eclipse diffuses sun’s light, drops temp in Tahoe

The eclipse on the sidewalk at Cave Rock as seen through a tree. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

While the sky didn’t go dark in Lake Tahoe during the eclipse Monday, the light was muted and the temperature definitely dropped.

“The main thing out here is everyone noticed the temperature dropped,” Bob Nielsen of South Lake Tahoe said while at Cove East.

According to the National Weather Service in Reno, the temperature in South Lake Tahoe dropped 4 degrees when the moon passed in front of the sun on the morning of Aug. 21.

Jessica Randall of South Lake watches the eclipse Aug. 21. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In South Lake Tahoe, the eclipse started at 9:04am, with the peak (84 percent) at 10:19am, and it was over by 11:42am.

Arless Lopez-Taylor, 7, liked watching it through his glasses, seeing how the shape of the sun kept changing. He is a bit of an astronomy nut, even likes to read astronomy news.

He was sitting on a log at Cove East, with Lake Tahoe behind him as he looked east with his dad, Nick Taylor, beside him.

Jessica Randall of South Lake Tahoe had her spot along the Upper Truckee River staked out just off Venice Drive. Being in her late 20s she knows it could be a few decades before another eclipse is so prominent where she lives. She'll have stories about this one to tell when the next one comes along.

Players at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club call a timeout to watch the eclipse. Photo/Dave Nostrant

It's not that solar eclipses are rare. At least two occur each year. It's just that most occur where people can't see them – like over some body of water.

This one, though, had a large swath of the United States in its path – from the Northwest to South Carolina, and an arc in

between, able to experience the total eclipse. The total eclipse only encompassed an area 70 miles wide.

Even though the sun's diameter is 400 times larger than the moon's, the sun is 400 times farther from Earth than the moon. This is why the two orbs look the same size, and the eclipse is possible.

For Darla Sadler of Bend, Ore., it was her dad who got her to travel to Prairie City, Ore., for today's event. It was Jim Sadler of Concord who said the partial eclipse in the Bay Area wasn't enough, nor was the 99 percent in Bend. He wanted the full deal. This bucket list item was "spectacular" for him.

"I didn't really know what to expect, but it was so worth seeing. If there is another in my lifetime, I will definitely go see it," Darla Sadler told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Cynthia Gorney uses a homemade device to view the eclipse. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Many who were out at Cove East didn’t have the special viewing glasses. It was a bit amazing when offered to look through a pair many said no thanks. Once convinced, the facial expressions and words of wonder were evidence they were seeing something special.

For Cynthia Gorney and Bill Sokol of Oakland they hurriedly put together a cereal box viewing contraption this morning. With foil attracting the sun and a hole in the box it was possible to see the eclipse reflected at the bottom of the box.

“I felt compelled to see the eclipse. And it’s the last day of our vacation. It’s a giant solar celebration of the wonderful three weeks we’ve had in Tahoe,” Gorney told *Lake Tahoe News.*

South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler had one of the more unusual vantage points for the event. He was flying in his plane at 14,000 feet in Central Oregon near Mount Jefferson.

“I wasn’t expecting it to be like it was. As soon as the direct light from the sun was covered by the moon it instantly illuminated this bluish-white coronal light you usually don’t see,” Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. He was flying his plane with his brother, Mark, as the passenger.

Uhler flew into Bend this morning, had breakfast and then went up to see the eclipse. He’s already back in Tahoe working.