Hi Folks!

The Sun went away, then the Sun came back, and the two and half minutes in between were absolutely magical. I’m not embarrassed to admit I had tears on my cheeks when it was over. Personally speaking, I had been waiting to see this eclipse since I was in 10th grade, which was way back in... well, a long time ago! Back then all I got to see was an 80% partial eclipse and I was near heartbroken to learn that the next total solar eclipse was going to be a long, long 37 years in the future. But, the Earth kept on orbiting, I got taller, then balder, then fatter, and somewhere along the way I hooked up with a group of crazy artists who where waiting for that eclipse just as impatiently as I was. Which made the experience all the more magical as I got to share it with them in the “wilds” of Idaho. For those of you who got to join the Great 2017 Idaho Eclipse Workshop, I know you had a great time, for those of you that didn’t, you can read about our wonderful adventure in this issue. And next time, JOIN IN! I promise you it will be worth the trip!

Jon Ramer
Gallery — Eclipse 2017

Eclipse Over Idaho, acrylic on canvas, Erika McGinnis

Eclipse Overhead, Oil on plywood, Sam Dietze

Eclipse, digital, David A. Hardy

Eclipse Overhead, acrylic on canvas, Erika McGinnis

IAAA Artists at Idaho Eclipse Workshop, Kara Szathmary

Totality, acrylic on canvas, Erika McGinnis

TN Ranch Eclipse, digital, Robin Hart

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From the Editor

Greetings and welcome to all the new members! We are growing so fast. I hope you are able to enjoy all of the features of being a part of this group. We have a great website, a list serve with many educational conversations going on, Facebook and Twitter accounts and this bi-annual journal. So please reach out, meet members, ask questions. We truly are here to help each other.

That being said, the focus of this issue is about our most recent workshop; viewing the eclipse in Idaho. As an Idahoan, I was honored to have members of the IAAA to visit this beautiful place. For the new members and those who have yet to join a workshop, I highly recommend going on one of these adventures with the IAAA. This was my third time attending a workshop and what you learn, what you experience and the bonds you will make with these artists is priceless.

Erika McGinnis, Pulsar Editor, Pulsar-editor@iaaa.org

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Cover: Dan Durda, digital photograph, taken at the IAAA Eclipse Workshop in Ririe, Idaho, 2017, as are the two photos above.
Kudos for members of IAAA

Simon Kregar—Interview in Spaceflight Insider called History in layers. Check it out here: www.spaceflightinsider.com/editorial/history-layers-work-simon-kregar-jr

Detlev van Ravenswaay—cover art for New Scientist.

Jon Ramer—guest speaker at Astronomy On Tap in Seattle, WA. Watch our president share what we are all about here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKIoZ9xQBds

Michael Carroll—gave a talk to the Denver Astronomical Society about “Distant Earths”.

Michael Carroll (with Rosaly Lopes) had an article (Enceladus on Earth) published in Astronomy magazine. It features his Antarctica photography and a painting of Enceladus incorporating some Antarctic elements.

Ron Miller—had a painting of New Horizons passing MU69 published in Astronomy magazine, February.

Dana Berry—created a half hour show on Curiosity Stream called “The Birth of the Solar System”. Joe Tucciarone and Mark Garlick did many of the animation sequences in this show.

Don Dixon—cover art for Astronomy Magazine, February.

New IAAA Fellow

Congratulations to Marilynn Flynn in her election as a Fellow of the IAAA!

Marilynn Flynn is a professional astronomical artist with a lifelong passion for space exploration that was fueled by growing up with the space program. She is one of the founding members of the I.A.A.A. and went on to earn her private pilot’s license after taking her first ride in a single engine airplane at the first Death Valley Workshop. She was on the NASA Fine Arts Program team for the tragic Challenger 51-L mission and her painting “Cosmic Cauldron” orbited Earth on the Mir Space Station as part of “Ars Ad Astra”, the first group art exhibit in space. She even sent a tiny sketch to the surface of Titan on a disk affixed to ESA’s Huygens lander! She enjoys traveling to geologically fascinating places that inspire her realistic paintings of other planetary surfaces. She paints with acrylics and colored pencils but most of her work these days is digital painting using Corel’s “Painter” program, a Wacom tablet and pen.
Welcome New Members!

Robin Pleak—I've always been captivated by science, and its flip side, the fantastic. I grew up reading all the classic sci-fi and fantasy authors, and started drawing and painting at an early age. I attended the Columbus College of Art and Design, but ended up as an electro-optical engineer for several major firms for 30+ years. Now that I'm retired, I have the time to return to my first love, art. You can find his work at robinpleakspacart.com

Efflam Mercier—Efflam is a Concept Artist working in entertainment, but a new interest for space that takes him on night-long journeys through the fascinating world of space engineering. Born in France in 1998, Efflam immersed himself in sci-fi novels and French comics, but also teaching himself how to use CGI early on. After studying Industrial Design in High School, he started out in visual effects as a 3D artist and animation studios in Paris, and later transitioned to concept art. Efflam is now working in Los Angeles, building rich & complex fictional worlds for Video Games and Film. i4is.org/who-we-are/interstellar-artists/efflam-mercier

Kari Weatherbee—a self taught Canadian artist residing in the province of Nova Scotia. She has been drawn to creative endeavors since her childhood and most recently in 2014 began developing a career in fine arts. When asked to describe what inspires her she replies, "The universe is my main source of inspiration. It embodies a magical atmosphere that takes away from my reality here on Earth and reminds me of a dream I once had as a child. I have many paintings yet to complete to show the beauty of our universal landscape."

Ryan Nagata—An artist and filmmaker from Los Angeles, CA. He has directed film and television, and his original art pieces have been used in media and exhibited internationally. Having worked extensively as a Hollywood prop and model maker, he always brings a cinematic sensibility to his work. His two major inspirations are science fiction and space exploration. Most recently, Ryan has become known for making some of the most accurate reproductions of spacesuits in the world, all hand-made in his Los Angeles studio. Many skills are required to fabricate a suit, including machining, molding/casting/painting, sewing, and engineering. His Mercury and Apollo space suits have been featured in print ads, film, and an episode of Mythbusters. His suits were also the subject of several videos on Adam Savage's Tested.com.

Diane C. Taylor— When I first began many years ago, a degree in German somewhat limited my job possibilities. In the end, I spent a little over 20 years working for German and Swiss entities related to space policy and space science, ending with a year and a half at the International Dark-sky Association in Tucson, Arizona. Glass has always interested me. I was finally able to devote some time to it in 2002. After trying stained glass and lampworking, I found fusing — and my passion. I began by making jewelry and, after a variety of workshops and classes and the purchase of a bigger kiln, I'm working on larger items: bowls, plates, wall hangings and just miscellaneous items. I love to play with colors and geometric patterns while maintaining a simplicity and elegance, and sometimes whimsy. I have work in galleries and stores in Tucson, AZ; Tubac, AZ; and Richmond, VA.

Tariq Zeyad - Growing up in my home country, Jordan, I was fascinated by the night sky and the thousands of tiny twinkle stars that spread across the expanse of space above us. Our house was located outside the city, which meant no light pollution or obstacles to affect the view of the night sky. I was lucky to be able to enjoy this scene every night when I was a child and it triggered my love and passion for space ever since.

I am Tariq Zeyad a 31-year old digital artist and astronomy enthusiast from Jordan currently residing in the United Arab Emirates. Although I graduated with a degree in English literature, my passion has always been art, and over the last few years, I have been producing various space artwork some of which was featured by NASA on the official Facebook page of the Hubble Space Telescope in 2016. I am also an active volunteer in the field of astronomy and translation as part of NASA in Arabic, an initiative whose primary mission is to translate astronomy and science articles from English to Arabic to promote the love for and awareness of astronomy and science in the Arab world.

Isabelle Grogg—I have been living and working in Ayrshire, Scotland since 2009. I am originally from Switzerland. Since leaving school I have been working in the aviation industry as an air traffic controller which I love very much. Painting, astronomy, and space have always been my hobbies. I have been painting for a long time, initially starting with chalk pastels. Nowadays, I am only using acrylic paint. My favorite subjects to paint are moon craters, playing with light and shadows. I often get asked if these paintings are with a texture as they look 3D - but no, they are painted on a normal canvas. As you will find out looking through my paintings, there are also other space related subjects, such as nebulas, galaxies or even spacecraft. In my spare time when the weather is nice, I will set up my solar telescope to observe and image the Sun. I am visiting schools and do public outreach to expose as many people as possible to the wonders of our closest star. I am volunteering for the Charlie Bates Solar Astronomy Project.

Eclipse, photographs, Jim Scotti. "Each are combines of 5 HDR images taken at 2 stop intervals in rapid succession. The higher magnification one was taken with my Canon 7D attached to my Celestron EdgeHD 8 inch telescope with 0.7x focal reducer. The longest exposure allowed me to see the Earthshine lit lunar surface while the shortest exposure allowed me to get the inner corona at the same time. The 2nd image was taken with my Canon 7D and a 70-200mm focal length lens at 200mm focal length and is actually pretty close to what my eyeballs saw while watching the eclipse. The Moon was darker than the dark blue sky around the corona and of course, Rigel is visible to the left of the eclipse. BTW, we were in eastern Oregon with my H.S. Physics teacher. I watched my first total solar eclipse on February 26, 1979 with Mr. Smith as well. It was great to visit with him and watch the eclipse together. Can't wait for 2024.... "
IAAA President Jon Ramer and I recently participated in an exciting workshop at the invitation of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO). Here is a brief report on this event.

In late May 2017, the IAAA was contacted by Suzanne Gurton, Assistant Director of Education and Public Outreach with the NRAO. She was interested in having artist involvement in their Next Generation Very Large Array (ngVLA) Workshop in Socorro, New Mexico. The purpose of the workshop was to continue developing the science program for the next generation radio telescope array.

The NRAO recognizes the connection between art & science and the benefits of collaboration. The goal was to have a number of artists participate in the workshop sessions, talk to the astronomers and ask questions, take notes and make sketches as appropriate. They would also be given a tour of the current Very Large Array (VLA) facility located about 50 miles east of Socorro. Even if you don’t recognize the name VLA, you’ve probably seen it in movies (Contact), TV shows, music videos, etc. Following the workshop, the artists would create illustrations that will help communicate the amazing potential of the ngVLA and the impact it is expected to have on the high priority goals of modern astronomy & astrophysics. Amazingly, the NRAO offered to cover the artists’ expenses to attend the workshop and also provide a stipend to each artist to create and deliver the final illustrations.

Suzy reached out to her old friend and former classmate, IAAA member Jim Scotti, who suggested she directly contact our president. There were extensive back-and-forth communications between Jon and Suzy to figure out how best to use the resources of the IAAA and work the details. Suzy also sought out individual artists and consulted with our own Lynette Cook on how to work with the space artist community. The biggest challenge we faced was time! Suzy’s first contact with Jon occurred less than a month before the workshop was scheduled to begin, and only a week before Spacefest. NRAO decided that they wanted a total of four artist participants and two of those were already accounted for: NRAO staff artist/animator Bill Saxton and Santa Fe artist Eddie Edwards. So there were only two slots remaining for IAAA artist participation. The Board discussed how best to proceed, given such short notice. Clearly we wanted to put our best foot forward and use this opportunity to forge a good relationship with the NRAO, but we also wanted at least one of the slots to be made available to our general membership if possible. However, many of our artists were busy getting ready for Spacefest and there just wasn’t enough time to put out a call for participants on the list serve and have the NRAO judge the submissions. We came up with a list of our artist members that we thought would best be able to represent us. Jon contacted these artists and almost none were available on such short notice. So we came up with a final short list and with Suzy’s approval and review of our art, Jon and I were selected to represent the IAAA.

In the midst of all of this, we managed to find the time to paint the traditional strip painting (pictured below). I think we did a pretty spectacular job! Our last night together, and after yet another dinner at, you guessed it, the pizza parlor, we had closing ceremonies. We gathered around and Jon sang us a song he composed for the theme; it went something like this:

“Rollin, rollin, rollin, keep those artists roaming, DRAWHIDE!
The moon is movin’, movin’ movin’, the corona’s really grooving’, keep those artists movin’, DRAWHIDE!
Through perfect sky and weather, Taking pics together, Wishing my brush was by my side, DRAWHIDE!
Paint it in! White it out! White it out! Paint it in!
We’re drivin’ drivin’ drivin’, and never seem to be arriving’, pleasant time your deprivin’, DRAWHIDE!
Herding cats is really taxing, your guide.
Let’s go low! Let’s go high! Lavas, rivers, mountainsides . . . DRAAW-HIIIIDE!

Then, in thanks for my help with the workshop, Jon and membership presented me with the gift of another smaller strip painting that we worked on together (pictured on the last page). I have that hanging in my studio now and it still brings a smile to me. A forever memory of an absolutely amazing time in my state with some darned awesome people.

City of Rocks photos by Jon Ramer.

City of Rocks photos by Jon Ramer.
2017 Great American Eclipse Workshop, continued

Craters of the Moon has quite a varied and colorful history. The area was Shoshone tribe territory and in some places and there are still standing formations and stone circles on top of the lava. It was also an alternative route for the great migrations along the Oregon Trail during the 1800s. In 1969, Alan Shepard, Edgar Mitchell, Eugene Cernan and Joe Engle trained here in volcanic geology, preparing for their moon missions.

Day 5, August 23, 2017

By this day, I was exhausted and decided to stay behind at the camp. Some of the others went on an adventure to the Tetons. The gondola took some spectacular views from the top, riding up in a gondola. Others ventured into the town of Idaho Falls, visiting the science center there. I tagged along with a group of young radio astronomers for an amazing tour of the VLA. Our tour host was none other than Dr. Rick Perley, one of the very first VLA scientists, who arrived as a postdoctoral research fellow in 1977 when the VLA was still under construction. Rick has been instrumental in demonstrating the amazing capabilities of the VLA and oversaw a major system upgrade that was completed in 2012. Rick is a high-energy kinda guy and it was a real pleasure listening to him describe the ins and outs of the VLA system. We were able to inspect one of the massive VLA radio telescopes up close and climb out onto the surface of its 25-meter antenna. Very cool!

Best of all, thanks to the efforts of NRAO Science Writer Nan Janney, Jon and I got rare permission from NRAO Security to walk out to the center of the VLA and do some photography at sunset. I posted many photos on my Facebook page and included one example here. I can’t describe how magical it was for the three of us to be out there alone, with no other human beings in sight in any direction out to the horizon! Well, there may have been some Rattlesnakes out there with us too. They apparently like to hang out by the warm railroad tracks in the evening as the temperature cools. We didn’t run into any, so the Rattlesnakes respected our privacy. :) Every few minutes, the entire array would come to life. All the antennas would move as a group as they were pointed at a new deep space observation target. It was so unbelievably cool!

In summary, we had a very positive experience with the NRAO and I believe we succeeded in establishing and excellent working relationship with them. We expect this relationship to open up some exciting future opportunities for the IAAA, including a possible IAAA workshop at the NRAO’s ALMA array in Chile, with a possible NSF grant to pay for lodging, food, and travel while inside Chile.

Our thanks to NRAO’s Suzanne Gurton, for making contact with the IAAA and facilitating this wonderful Art & Science collaboration opportunity.

IAAA Trip Report - continued

The ngVLA workshop took place in Socorro from June 26 through 29 on the campus of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, where the NRAO manages its VLA operations center. This workshop was a fantastic experience! It was a privilege to meet and engage with the astronomers, astrophysicists, engineers, and administrators, gathered together to develop science requirements for the next generation radio telescope array. Various “science use cases” that push the requirements for the future system were discussed. These included the following broad topic categories:

1. The Cradle of Life, including topics such as proto-planetary systems and formation, cloud cores to stars, astrochemistry/biology, the Solar System, and SETI.
2. Galaxy Ecosystems, including topics such as galactic structure, interstellar medium and star formation, nearby galaxies, outflows and inflows, and supermassive black holes (SMBHs).
3. Galaxy Formation, including topics such as cool gas and dust, dynamics, and active galactic nuclei (AGN)/SMBHs.
4. Time Domain/Cosmology/Physics, including topics such as transient sky, synoptic surveys, AGN physics, high-energy phenomena, stellar phenomena, and pulsars.

Each of the participating artists selected one of these four categories to focus on. During the course of the workshop, we took notes and made sketches to help us figure out what kind of final artwork we will eventually deliver. You can find out more about this ngVLA Workshop and view all of the presentations here:

https://science.nrao.edu/science/meetings/2017/ngvla-science-program/index

A wonderful article about what we do was issued in the Paris Review, including an interview with our president, Jon Ramer. Written by Kastalia Medrano, the article is a very inspiring affirmation of what our importance is to the public and the art world. In the words of James Webb, “An artistic record of this nation’s program of space exploration will have great value for future generations and may make a significant contribution to the history of American art.” You can read the article here: www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/08/14/the-art-of-space-art.

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2017 Great American Eclipse IAAA Workshop 
(Total Eclipse of the Art)

By: Erika McGinnis

More than two years ago, our president Jon Ramer began making plans for the IAAA to have a workshop focused on the 2017 eclipse that crossed America last summer. His research went into NASA weather files and other factors to get the best shot at viewing. NASA actually had Idaho Falls, Idaho, picked for the best chance. So in the tiny farming community and recreational wilderness of Ririe, Idaho, just northeast of Idaho Falls and on a ranch called 7N Ranch, the plans were laid. Jon booked the place, including three cabins, some RV area and camping and while hotels across the country were cancelling reservations and charging quadruple the prices, 7N Ranch never did that to us even as they realized what was happening. Good hosts.

About on year prior, I ran my first reconnaissance mission to check out the facilities and confirm reservations as well as what would be needed to bring to the workshop. From there, some ideas were put forth for activities and places to visit for everyone while here in my home state.

As we all can remember, a little bit of hysteria was building up regarding the sheer numbers of people possibly visiting areas along the path of totality. States across the country also began disaster preparations for receiving huge numbers of travelers, clogged highways and emergency personnel. News began to urge people to pack provisions and fuel. In Idaho, concern about inexperienced travelers trying to access forest roads in the thousands prompted closures of some of the deepest forest areas. River of No Return Wilderness and Boise National Forest decided to close off access to areas in the path with concerns of upended vehicles getting stuck on rugged roads and lack of emergency responders being available for rescue, fire risks, and delicate salmon runs being trampled.

With all of the anticipation and excitement building, the IAAEers got ready for the countdown to our own adventures toward totality. Attending members included: Mark Pestana, Lucy West Binall, Robin Hart, Marilynn Flynn, April Faires, Pat Rawlings, Mike D’Albertis, Simon Kregar, Dan Durda, Rick Sterbach, Aldo Spadoni, Kara Szathmary, Malcolm Currie, Pamela Lee, Jon Ramer, and myself. Lots of family were also in attendance, which made for a very nice, lively group.

Day 4 - 3rd Contact - August 22, 2017

This day we all made the trek to Arco, Atomic City, the EBR-1 and Craters of the Moon National Monument.

Arco is a small town in Idaho named after Georg Von Arco, (1869–1940) of Germany, who was visiting at the time and was the inventor of radio vacuum tubes and founded the Telefunken company. It’s original name was Root Hog (yes, we’re in Idaho). Arco was the first town in the world to be powered by nuclear energy, on July 17, 1955. It is currently home to many people who work at the Idaho National Energy and Engineering Lab. The population is about 850 and dropping.

Next was a stop at Atomic City and a tour of the EBR-1, Experimental Breeder Reactor. Here we enjoyed a quick tour of the world’s first nuclear power plant. It fired up on December 21st, 1951 and ran the power for nearby Arco until it was decommissioned in 1964. Currently, it’s focus is on researching safe operations for current nuclear power plants in the U. S. and the world by improving fuel cycles, developing advanced systems and educating the public and new scientists and engineers with university support.

Craters of the Moon

Finally, we ventured on to the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. In 1906, President Coolidge designated this area as a national monument, using the Antiquities Act. Just recently, it’s acres were spared being cut down with current policies regarding national monuments. It’s first notoriety came from a National Geographic article and it’s unusual features gathered public interest. President Coolidge remarked “it’s a weird and scenic landscape, peculiar to itself”. Formed from many volcanoes along the Snake River Basin call the Great Rift, COTM is geologically recent, most of the activity happening about 15,000 years ago and as recently as 2000 years ago. The brochure says future volcanic events are likely.

I had made arrangements months in advance for our group to have free reign of the place, allowed to wander wherever our artistic hearts desired. When we arrived, it was a full zoo! But I checked and we were still allowed full access, along with everyone else that was there to visit, many from out of state here to witness the eclipse. As our caravan made the loop, we were turned away at most of the parking areas. We later discovered why: apparently Neil DeGrasse Tyson was there with his entourage filming the area! If only one of us could have approached him—I do think he would have appreciated our group and what we were doing there. Eventually, we were able to explore, spending the day photographing, sketching and painting all over the grounds.
Day One—1st Contact—Aug. 19, 2017

Workshop attendees drove in from California, Colorado, Arizona, and some flew in from as far away as New York and Florida. After picking up Michael D’Albertis and Pat Rawlings from the Boise airport, I was also on my way toward Idaho Falls on highways predicted to be full of dense traffic. I handed the keys to Michael and Pat, while I got in my husband’s truck and we headed out, texting to the two about the scenery we were passing by. We journeyed along Highway 20, and to my surprise, it was as lone and desolate as I had ever seen it! Hardly another vehicle in sight for miles at times.

Our journey began in Boise, then on to Mountain Home, where Idaho’s Mnt. Home Air Force Base is located. From there, we took Hwy 20 through Camas Prairie, the outside edge of the Sawtooth Mountain Range, Craters of the Moon National Monument (which we will revisit in depth a little later), and on to Idaho Falls, eclipse central.

Eventually we made it to Ririe and the 7N Ranch. One by one, most of the IAAA arrived. Jon called a gathering of everyone where he handed out the artist swag bags, t-shirts and, of course, orange food. The first roll call was held and we all went over the tentative itinerary for the week ahead. All made introductions with each other as there are always new faces at the workshops.

Opening ceremonies of the IAAA Total Eclipse of the Art workshop were concluded! For the rest of the evening, everyone did a little exploring of the area on their own and we convened at the only restaurant near, a pizza place called Heise Hot Springs Pizza Parlor, a place we would become all too familiar with.

(Photos courtesy of: first two rows, E. McGinnis, third row, Dan Durda, last row, Pat Rawlings, April Faires.)
Day 2—Aug. 20, 2018

We were on our own for the first full day in Ririe, so everyone went exploring the territory. Some went along the Snake River for plein air painting. Others went on a driving expedition. A few were also busy keeping an eye on the weather forecast for the next day. My husband, Sandon, and I went hiking along the rim of the mountains nearby in what is the Targhee National Forest. At a few spots along the rim we could even see all the way to the Teton Mountain Range located on the Idaho/Wyoming border. One thing we noticed on all of the paths and dirt roads, every bare place was taken. The hills were full of unofficial campers; tents and trailers were squeezed into any area they could fit.

We all concluded the day gathering at the pizza place (again, as it was the only game in town) and shared the days’ adventures.

Day 3—Second Contact—Aug 21, 2017

This was the big day . . .

We awoke to slightly hazy skies, but with some assurance from Dan Durda, we were confident (hopeful) that the haze would clear. It did, and it was starting out to be a great day to watch an eclipse!

Everyone was busy setting up telescopes, cameras, paints and easels, sketchpads and computers. I think Dan had at least four Go Pros set up around and a few on drones! Next to us was an astronomical group from California also setting up a vast array of equipment. They were very nice company to share the space with. (Speaking of the space, did I mention that we had an entire golf course practically to ourselves? Not that we needed it, as there was plenty of room for all to view here. Thank you, Jon!)

All set up and waiting, patience wasn’t really happening. The mood was very giddy; everyone was going to and fro, anxiously passing the time until first contact. Checking, rechecking cameras and batteries, testing equipment and computers, chatting excitedly, but no one was sitting still. But all settled in soon to their preferred places and the show began.

Someone shouted “First contact!” There was wild cheering everywhere. We watched as the sun became a crescent and the light slowly dimmed. Shadows took on an eerie cast as they sharpened. We found bright, clear crescents all over any smooth surface with shadows cast on them—cabin walls, bare ground, Simon Kregar’s tent. All around us there was an almost metallic hue. The temperature dropped significantly, now feeling a bit chilly in the Idaho desert air. And it got quiet.

Day 3—Second Contact—continued

There was too much to take in at this point, and I can only recall my point of view from about one minute to first contact, so I will just narrate my own recollection of the experience. I am sure this was the case for most. I settled in on a blanket on the grass and just waited, watching with the solar viewing glasses as the sun was slowly swallowed up by the moon. A countdown began from somewhere far off, I think from the nearby camping area. I think one of our group yelled “Bailey’s beads!” Then “second contact!” Cheers again, but this time with gasps of astonishment. The safety glasses came off. Time flew by from here.

If you have not witnessed a totality yet, I will say that you must sometime in your life. It is truly the most indescribable, emotional thing you can see in the sky. As I gazed up at the huge inky blackness of the sun, and its moving, silver tendrils of the corona, I was paralyzed. Something awakens in that primitive part of your mind. I know I cried a little, just from overwhelming. Just seeing such a beautiful thing. I could not take my eyes off of it, even though I knew to look for other things going on. I did see stars in the darkened sky in my full vision, trying to take it all in. And Mars, Venus and Jupiter. I took just a few pictures, but I knew to let the pros handle that and just be still and experience this. Then a call announcing “Diamond Ring” and “third contact”, lots of cheering . . . and the totality was over. Two minutes and 11 seconds.

The rest of this day was spent processing what we all witnessed together, sharing thoughts, painting pictures, downloading photos with a very spotty internet connection. Dan was wise and brought some Corona beer and shared, raising a toast to this remarkable event.