



A-STATE PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS

Hundreds gather to watch historic total solar eclipse

RACHEL RUDD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cheers erupted from hundreds of students and community members gathered on campus as the moon completely covered the sun for two and a half minutes in Monday's total solar eclipse.

Arkansas State University had an entire day of activities for the eclipse, including a lawn party in front of the Reng Student Union, Howl at the Sun, where local grade school students learned about science, and more.

In Jonesboro, the eclipse began at 12:37 p.m. The moon fully covered the sun at 1:55 p.m., with the eclipse concluding at 3:14 p.m. The next total solar eclipse in the United States won't happen until 2044.

"This was just something that really brought me joy to be able to see this eclipse. It's like a once-in-a-lifetime thing," said Lily Garza, a junior interdisciplinary studies major from Fort Myers, Florida. "I can't explain it, but, everybody when they started cheering in full totality, that just made me feel so happy and I was like, 'I'm so happy all these other people can enjoy the same thing with me.'"

The Student Government Association collaborated with the Office of Student Affairs to host the eclipse watch party, which drew an estimated 500 students. Students and community members were provided free eclipse glasses and snow cones, all while a DJ. blasted music.

"It's neat to see how many students are really excited about it and are getting to experience something that they might never get to experience again," said Katy Provence, director

of student engagement. "What a cool thing to remember about being in college, that you got to do something like this with your friends."

During the watch party, members from some of the Divine Nine fraternities and sororities participated in an impromptu strolling. Members of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. led the charge when the DJ. played one of the sorority's national songs "Shake That Monkey."

Group members said it was completely unplanned, but they enjoyed "getting the party started." Other Divine Nine groups, including Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi, followed with their own strolls shortly after.

In addition, 150-200 kindergarten to 12th grade students were on campus for Howl at the Sun, where they visited different booths from on and off-campus organizations to learn about both eclipses and science.

Booths included The New York Institute of Technology, which had a telescope to livestream the eclipse when it reached totality, the Arkansas Biosciences Institute (ABI), which had a scale model of the solar system and the Nursing Department, which educated students on the basics of solar eclipses.

"I was available to help talk about space, which I really love to help people learn more about," said Katy Willis, a researcher at BioStrategies, an organization that works with ABI. "It's been pretty fun. I've gotten to talk to the University of Memphis and the Memphis Museum of Science and History, which are all really nice people and



Students at the Heritage Plaza Lawn watch the solar eclipse as it nears totality.

Photo by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief



Photo by Shelby Russom | Staff Photographer

The solar eclipse at totality. In Jonesboro, totality was at 1:55 p.m.

just learn some new things."

Other events included a pop-up exhibition at the Braddury Art Museum, a three-day festival at the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home and an Eclipse Block Party at the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center.

Students and faculty in attendance said the eclipse was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and one they won't soon forget.

"It's much more dramatic than I thought I was expecting," said John Cummins, adjunct instructor of music. "It was really wild how quickly it



Students pointing at the eclipse as totality approaches.

Photo by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief

got dark and then just how quickly the light was back."

Cummins could be seen walking around the Heritage Plaza Lawn with a stuffed wolf named Wolfgang on his shoulder. Wolfgang is the mascot of the music department and wore solar eclipse glasses for social media content.

"I definitely think we have a special community here," said Esmeralda Figueroa, a first-year exercise science major from Green Forest, Arkansas. "Everybody was just being able to enjoy this one very special moment in our lives together."

Jerry Don Burton, news editor, contributed to this report.

A-State student working to combat on-campus feral cat population

RACHEL RUDD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A student is looking to decrease the feral cat population on campus by partnering with the Wynne Animal Rescue Veterinary Clinic and starting a trap, neuter, release (TNR) program.

Emily Peters, a junior animal science major from Cape Girardeau, Missouri said she got the idea for the program a year and a half ago, when she moved to Collegiate Park.

"When I got to Collegiate Park, there were two semi-feral female cats that were already spayed and they hung out outside of my apartment," Peters said. "As I started taking care of these two females, I noticed more cats around the area and I started to take an interest in it."

Currently, the program has resulted in the capture, neutering and release of one male feral cat, whom

Peters named Captain Rex.

Trap, neuter and release programs prevent feral cats from reproducing, keeping the populations under control. Female cats can reproduce as early as six months old and males can produce thousands of offspring, which if left unchecked, can cause populations to skyrocket and for animal shelters to be overwhelmed.

This type of program also maintains local bird populations, as cats are considered an invasive species, and prevents the spread of disease to both people and other cats.

The program catches the cats using live traps, where the cat trips a line, causing the trap door to shut. After it is trapped, the cat is then transported to the Wynne Animal Rescue Veterinary Clinic. Peters said students can report feral cat sightings to her via email, emily.peters4@smail.astate.edu.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMILY PETERS

(Mugshot) Emily Peters

(Cat photo) Captain Rex, the first feral cat captured by Peters's program.

Peters said she partnered with the Wynne Animal Rescue Veterinary Clinic because they provide yearly vaccinations, plus spay/neutering procedures for \$35 per animal. The clinic provides low-cost procedures through

the Bissell Pet Foundation, a nonprofit that supports animal welfare organizations in underserved communities.

Jessica Mays, a junior pre-vet major from Cherry Valley, Arkansas, and a vet tech at the Wynne Animal

Rescue Veterinary Clinic, said even though the clinic is strained, they still try to squeeze in appointments from Peters's program.

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