

Carlinville Public Library Hosts "Eclipse 101:" Dazzling Photos, Safety Tips Part of Program

by Tom Emery
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CARLINVILLE – A free program at the Carlinville Public Library will discuss everything residents need to know about the upcoming total solar eclipse.

“Eclipse 101” is a one-hour discussion scheduled for Tuesday, April 2 from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. The program will be presented by John Myers, a retired Springfield attorney with an interest in astrophotography.

The Carlinville library will also have free eclipse glasses available on a first-come, first serve basis as long as supplies last.

The upcoming eclipse on April 8 has sparked a flurry of interest, with parts of the central and southern United States gearing for a tourism boom and special “eclipse glasses” flying off the shelves.

It is the first total eclipse in the U.S. since Aug. 21, 2017, but that event was shrouded by cloudy weather in much of central Illinois. Sixteen total eclipses have been recorded somewhere in the continental U.S. since 1867.

Topics in Myers’ program at the Carlinville library will include the difference between a solar eclipse and lunar eclipse, the difference between partial and total eclipses, locations to view the total eclipse and its duration, where to purchase solar glasses, how to purchase solar filter material to make solar filters for binoculars, and how to take photos of the eclipse.

Safety will be emphasized throughout the program. “It’s safety first,” said Myers. “As the sun disappears behind the moon and before totality, it is essential to use eye protection in the form of solar glasses. Or, if one is using binoculars, with proper solar filters that cannot fall off.

“To not use protection is to risk blindness,” warned Myers. “Once totality occurs, it is all right to take off the glasses, but the moment the sun starts peeking out from behind the moon after totality, it is essential to once again use eye protection.”

A Seattle native, Myers graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in chemistry in 1973. He then spent four years in the Army as a nuclear weapons officer before enrolling at Northwestern Law School. Myers practiced law in Springfield for thirty-four years before his retirement in 2019.

Myers, who bought his first telescope in 1987, says that his interest in astronomy rekindled with the solar eclipse of August 2017. However, that event was shrouded by cloudy weather in much of central Illinois.

He also became interested in astrophotography after his retirement. Myers will display some of his fascinating photos during his program in Carlinville. Other photos by Myers may be seen on his page at www.flicker.com.

Myers is a board member and treasurer of the Sangamon Astronomical Society, a group of amateur astronomers that was founded in 1953. Members range in age from 19 to 85.

Today, the society has an observation field near Pleasant Plains, and hosts an annual three-night star party at Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area in Cass County. Additional information is found at the group's Facebook page and website, www.sas-sky.org.

“A total eclipse is one of the most amazing natural phenomena that one can experience,” said Myers. “To me, it is right up there with seeing a volcano in action, or the birth of a baby.”

For more information on Myers' discussion or the other programs offered at the Carlinville library, contact 217-854-3505 or mail@carlinvillelibrary.org.