

TRAVEL



Muchin College Prep students on a field trip react as clouds briefly clear above Millennium Park, letting them view the solar eclipse on Aug. 21, 2017. ALEXANDRA WIMLEY/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Near totality

Where to get goosebumps during April's solar eclipse in the Midwest

By Katherine Rodeghier
For the Chicago Tribune

Cities in the Midwest are deep in planning mode for festivities to celebrate a rare astronomical phenomenon that will sweep across the United States this spring, while travelers are nailing down plans to witness it.

During the total solar eclipse on April 8 the moon will completely block the sun, leaving visible only its corona — its ethereal outer atmosphere.

Unlike a “ring of fire” eclipse, when a thin circle of sun peeks from behind the moon’s silhouette, during a total solar eclipse the sky darkens to deep indigo twilight with sunset colors circling the horizon.

Temperatures drop, the wind picks up, insects chirp, bats come out to feed, farm animals head for their barns and birds go to roost. Bright planets, stars and even a comet may appear if the skies are clear.

When totality occurs over oceans or sparsely populated land masses, the phenomenon receives little notice. But when totality happens over cities, thousands travel to soak up the eerie sensation.

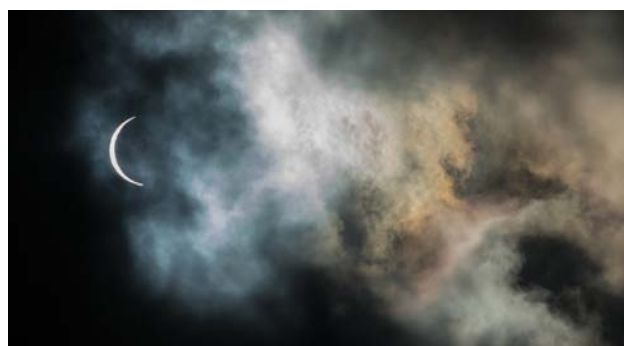
An August 2017 total eclipse — the first since 1918 to cross the U.S. from coast to coast — drew massive crowds in the Midwest. The moon’s dark shadow was 70 miles wide and totality lasted for about two minutes.

On April 8 totality will occur in a 125-mile-wide band and, depending on location, will last up to 4 minutes, 28 seconds, according to the American Astronomical Society. The next total solar eclipse to traverse the U.S. will not occur until 2045.

While it’s OK to stare at the sky without eye protection during totality, observers must use eclipse glasses — sunglasses won’t cut it — or a special handheld viewer to prevent eye injury before and after the moon completely blocks the sun.

Camera lenses, telescopes and binoculars must have solar filters over the front opening. The AAS has a list of providers of eclipse-viewing equipment. Eclipse glasses will be available at some events.

A partial eclipse will be



The total solar eclipse is seen from the campus of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale on Aug. 21, 2017.

ZBIGNIEW BZDAK/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

visible in many Midwest areas, but anyone who wants to experience totality, starting about 1:50 p.m. CDT in southern Missouri and about 3:10 p.m. EDT in northern Ohio, should book lodging and campgrounds well in advance and keep their fingers crossed for cloud-free skies on April 8.

Cities continue to plan festivities, many starting the weekend before the Monday eclipse. Check websites for updates.

Here are some locations where you can still participate in Midwest eclipse-viewing activities.

ILLINOIS

Carbondale: Situated at the center of the path of totality, Carbondale claims to be the Eclipse Crossroads of America. An eclipse event at Southern Illinois University’s football stadium will feature a range of cultural and scientific activities hosted by Michelle Nichols of Chicago’s Adler Planetarium.

Viewers will witness totality as it crosses North America through live telescope streams from scientific observations. The Southern Illinois Crossroads Eclipse Festival from April 5-8 will include an arts and crafts fair, educational programs, Saluki Eclipse Con, an expo and a range of cultural events.

Makanda: The Touch of Nature Outdoor Education Center will have professional and amateur astronomers on hand during the eclipse, with livestreaming should the weather be inclement. An extended weekend stay includes lodging, activities, prime eclipse viewing space, educational sessions and meals on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Alto Pass: The spiritual monument Bald Knob Cross of Peace, which stands at 111 feet on a mountaintop in the Shawnee

National Forest, offers admission tickets on April 8 for casual and serious eclipse viewers. Tickets include a commemorative T-shirt and eclipse glasses.

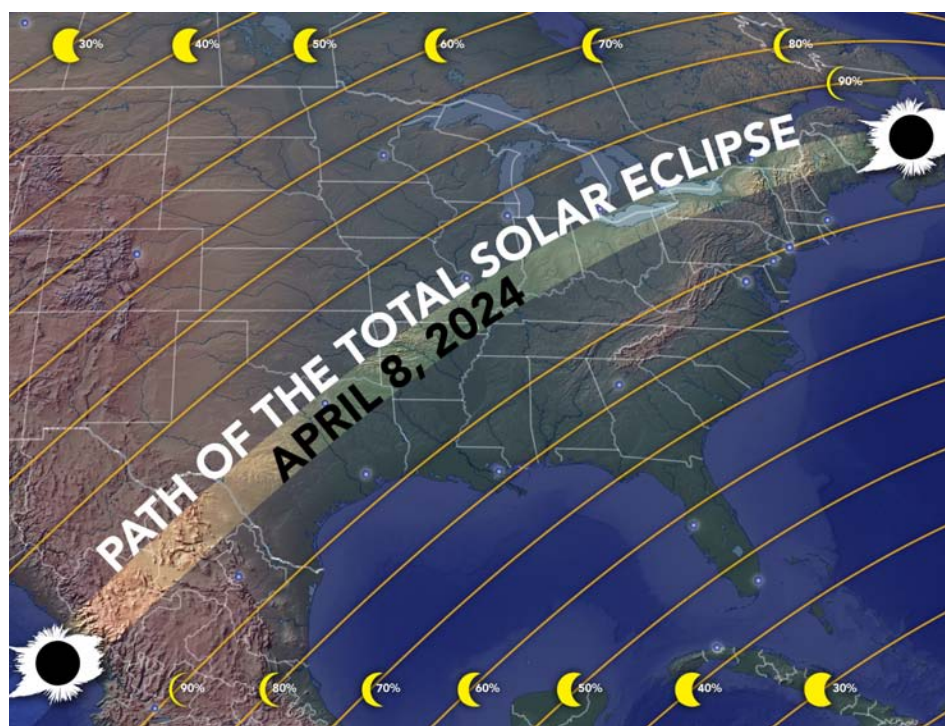
INDIANA

Richmond: Eclipse & More 2024, held April 4-8 at the Wayne County Fairgrounds, will include an educational talk with a retired NASA scientist, the Wind Wolves Traveling Kite Show, an alien egg drop, dancing LED robots, a nighttime drone show and fireworks. Visitors will see grill masters at work during the Midwest Grill ‘n’ Show. Concert headliners include the Led Zeppelin Experience and other tribute bands.

Indianapolis: Indy Eclipse Weekend from April 5-8 will feature games, films and performances celebrating astronomy. NASA will broadcast live from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, which has infield parking, camping and RV sites. NASA experts will be on hand to answer questions.

Eclipse activities are planned at the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis and the Indiana State Museum. Newfields, a 152-acre campus of art galleries, gardens and a historic home, will have a Total Eclipse of the Art event with Champagne toasts, food and a music festival. White River State Park has green space for eclipse viewing and will park 40 food trucks on the Washington Street Bridge.

Evansville: Events on April 7 and 8 include Solar-palooza at the University of Southern Indiana with a talk by, retired NASA astronaut, experiential learning programs, music and food trucks. An astro-physicist will give a presentation during UEclipse at the University of Evansville, and a lecture at the Native American site Angel



Path of the the total solar eclipse on April 8. MICHAEL ZEILER/GREATAMERICANECLIPSE.COM

Mounds will demonstrate how mounds were engineered to align with the sun and moon. Watch parties are planned at the Evansville Wartime Museum and the Children’s Museum of Evansville.

Vincennes: The Dark Side of the Wabash party from April 6-8 will feature WeddingPalooza, group nuptials on eclipse day. The weekend also includes music, food trucks, kids activities, a beer garden and wine tasting. Vendors will offer crystals and tarot card readings. A Pink Floyd tribute band will perform and “Laughter Before Darkness” will take place at the Red Skelton Museum. www.eclipseindiana.org/events/dark-side-bash

Bloomington: The Shadowfest 2024 Solar Eclipse Camping and Music Festival will take over the Monroe County Fairgrounds April 6-8 with kids activities, hot-air balloon rides, science programming, performances by about a dozen bands and an interactive outdoor drum circle on eclipse day. Couples are invited to book a wedding package or bring their own officiant and get married atop their RV. The fairgrounds has RV and tent camping as well as an unobstructed 360-degree view of the sky for viewing a full-circle sunset during totality.

Elsewhere in the Bloomington area, Switchyard Park’s calendar of eclipse activities April 5-8 includes a trivia night, karaoke, crafts, games, a performance by the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, movie night, live music, food trucks and a beer garden. WonderLab Museum will have eclipse toys, scientific tools and an

opportunity to buy eclipse glasses and make a pinhole viewer April 6. It will host an all-ages street party outside April 8.

Eclipse weekend events are planned at Monroe Lake and Lake Lemon. Fowler Pumpkin Patch farm will have music, food and a beer garden on eclipse day. The Waldron Arts Center will screen “2001: A Space Odyssey” on April 8. Indiana University plans to hold an eclipse watch party in Memorial Stadium.

OHIO

Cleveland: Total Eclipse Fest 2024 will be an outdoor family event April 6-8 at North Coast Harbor in downtown Cleveland. The Great Lakes Science Center, home to NASA’s Glenn Research Center, will participate along with the Cleveland Orchestra. NASA experts will be on site and NASA-TV will broadcast live during the eclipse.

On April 7 the orchestra’s “Out of this World” concert will include music from “Star Wars” and “Also sprach Zarathustra,” from the film “2001: A Space Odyssey,” paired with images from the Hubble Telescope, International Space Station and NASA’s photo archives. Vantage points for eclipse viewing include Cleveland Metroparks, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and parks and beaches along Lake Erie.

Sandusky: Eclipse activities in the Shores and Islands region include April 8 watch parties at Vermillion Valley Vineyards; Lakeside Chautauqua, a historic recreational community; and Parkside Drive-In, a historic drive-in movie theater in Oregon, Ohio, a few minutes from Maumee Bay and Lake Erie.

Jet Express ferry is planning to take several vessels onto Lake Erie to give passengers a view of totality from the water.

Jackson Street Pier will have vendors and musical entertainment for the Total Eclipse of Sundusky Festival April 5-8. The Hayes Presidential Library & Museum, where the exhibit “Chasing Totality: The History and Science of Eclipses” has been entertaining astronomy buffs since last fall, plans eclipse activities for kids on April 6, including a scavenger hunt, a reading station and crafts. The Sidney Frohman Planetarium’s show Great American Solar Eclipse will be held April 7 and will occur outside on April 8.

MISSOURI

West Plains: This town nestled in the Missouri Ozarks is planning Eclipse West Plains: Party in the Path from April 5-8 with murals, history and art tours, a 5K run and concert. The Sunshine Festival will have music and food trucks and a beer garden and the Heart of the Ozarks Fairgrounds will host a hot-air balloon event, live music and fireworks. The fairgrounds are an official viewing site for the eclipse, along with the West Plains Civic Center and the Ted Landers Soccer Complex.

Cape Girardeau: This Mississippi River town plans to have music, food trucks and music activities at the Sportsplex for eclipse viewers April 8. Fort D Historic Site will celebrate totality with a cannon firing. A carnival and music at Benton Speedway will be part of the Eclipse Festival from April 6-8.

Katherine Rodeghier is a freelance writer.

Crowning moment

The CSO on tour: Riccardo Muti and the orchestra are selling out across Europe — with a high point at Musikverein in Vienna.



TODD ROSENBERG



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Near totality

The stars have aligned for the Midwest to experience another total eclipse, and many towns are gearing up to welcome thousands.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Financial crises hit Heartland Alliance

Turmoil threatens to upend safety net programs across city

By Brian J. Rogal
Chicago Tribune

One of the city's leading social service organizations, beset by a pair of financial crises that last year engulfed its housing and health care divisions, could be on the verge of splitting up.

The turmoil at the Heartland Alliance, a sprawling nonprofit encompassing five divisions providing a vast array of social services, threatens to upend important safety net programs at a time when Chicago is experiencing an influx of migrants, many of whom need help with health care and housing.

Heartland Alliance's housing division, which grappled with inflation and declining rent collections during the pandemic, ceased operations last spring and needs buyers for the roughly 1,000 affordable units it operated in Chicago and Wisconsin.

Heartland's health division, struggling to cover escalating health costs and expenses associated with a surge of migrants in its shelters, indefinitely furloughed more than 150 employees between September and November and cut back programming. It's now considering spinning off into an independent organization, according to a written statement from Mary Kay Gilbert, interim executive director of Heartland Alliance Health, and Chief External Affairs Officer Ed Stellan. Health care centers in Englewood, Uptown and the Near West Side remain open.

"(Heartland Alliance Health) is considering a variety of options and no final decisions have been made at this time," Gilbert and Stellan wrote.

"Heartland Alliance as an entity will cease to exist," said Michael Brieschke, a Heartland Alliance case manager and unit chair of the

Turn to Heartland, Page 2



Breaking a bottleneck

Belt Junction is a notorious snag in the rail system. Fixing it could boost capacity, but benefits to South Side residents might be mixed.

By John Lippert and Sarah Freishtat
Chicago Tribune

As Percy Fields waits at Belt Junction, three freight trains stand nearby with their engines running and headlights shining in the chilly, predawn darkness.

Fields is president of the Belt Railway of Chicago, which is operating one of the trains. His job is to keep it moving.

But on this morning, like most others, the freight carriers must wait until a solitary Metra commuter train rolls through and opens up the track. Then they can blast their horns, clank and start to move.

Even then, they crawl at 5 mph

Above: A Metra train passes through a bottleneck on the Belt Junction on Chicago's South Side on Jan. 5.
E. JASON WAMBSGANS/TRIBUNE

through Belt Junction, a half-mile jumble of crumbling, century-old tracks along 75th Street between Western Avenue and Halsted Street on the South Side.

It's Chicago's most notorious rail bottleneck because, more than a hundred years ago, somebody decided five sets of tracks should merge into two and cross each other's path.

It's such a torment that Fields and other freight railroaders, plus Metra, Amtrak and government officials

from across Chicago, have been working for more than 20 years to rip up Belt Junction and start over.

They want to spend \$2.5 billion for new tracks, viaducts and flyovers to double the Belt Junction corridor's annual capacity to 4 million rail cars.

Belt Junction is a critical building block in their plan to boost by nearly 80% their rail capacity in the Chicago region as a whole by 2052.

The project presents Chicago with painful dilemmas.

As has been true for hundreds of years, Chicago's location at the bottom of the Great Lakes still brings intense pressure to move more freight.

Turn to Junction, Page 6

Death cuts off dreams of man recently freed



Lee Harris, left, stands next to his son Jermaine Harris, right, during a news conference at the former site of the Cabrini Green housing projects in Chicago on Sept. 28. Harris filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the Chicago Police Department. TRENT SPRAGUE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Murder conviction vacated after decades spent behind bars

By Christy Gutowski
Chicago Tribune

Lee Harris died just as he was embarking on the final chapter of a life interrupted.

Harris spent 33 years in prison, convicted of murder. During his decades of incarceration, he obtained a college associate degree, volunteered in prison ministries and directed gospel choirs, all while trying to prove his innocence.

Eight months before his death last Thanksgiving at age 68, the Chicago man finally won back his freedom.

When he started serving time he was a young married father from Cabrini-Green who had helped organize youth athletic programs and anti-violence events and volunteered for prominent figures such as Mayor Jane Byrne and Jesse White, then a state representative.

Harris also was a self-admitted hustler and petty thief on parole for burglary. When police arrested him in the 1989 murder of a promising young graduate student, they cited his shifting stories. He would later say he'd been foolish — naively repeating what police told him to say with an eye on collecting a \$25,000 reward.

"I ain't no angel," he told the Tribune that year. "But I don't

Turn to Harris, Page 10

INSIDE



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Bulls' LaVine to miss rest of season

Star needs surgery on right foot to treat ongoing swelling and discomfort. **Chicago Sports**

Biden rolls to win in South Carolina

Democrats moved the state to a prime slot to help elevate Black vote. **Nation & World**

TODAY'S WEATHER



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\$5.75 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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TRAVEL

Near totality

The stars have aligned for the Midwest to experience another total eclipse and many towns are gearing up to welcome thousands



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AL PHILLIPS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE 1966

LIFE

The birth of a movement

An oral history project by the Chicago Theological Seminary shows how it served as an incubator for the area's Civil Rights leaders



SCOTT OLSON/GETTY

BALANCING ACT

'He was such a sweet soul'

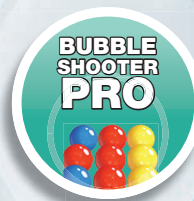
A community grieves the loss of its neighbor Pete, who lived quietly in a big, orange tent, writes Heidi Stevens

LIFE

Crush's texting habits leaving you confused?

Lack of messages might not mean there isn't interest

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