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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON
PLANETARIUM
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Partial Solar Eclipse Watch Party



More than 100 people joined us on Thursday, October 23 to watch as the Moon slipped in front of the Sun during a partial solar eclipse. We had telescopes and cameras set up to safely view the Sun. Solar glasses were available for purchase in the ticket booth. News stations from across the Metroplex joined the public and Planetarium staff to watch this rare event. Among the news stations covering the event were Fox News, Univision, CBS and the university newspaper, *The Shorthorn*.

Solar eclipses are not rare events, in spite of what many people think. A minimum of two and a maximum of five solar eclipses occur every year. Total eclipses are more rare; zero to two total solar eclipses can happen in a year. Every eclipse can't be observed everywhere on Earth, as the Moon's tiny shadow sweeps a narrow band of only a few hundred miles on Earth's surface. This narrow band is called the eclipse path and only locations on the eclipse path can observe the eclipse. We need to remember that three quarters (3/4) of Earth's surface is covered by water and therefore the majority of eclipse paths fall on water. To be able to see these spectacular eclipse events, people travel all over the world to where an eclipse path meets with land. The next partial eclipse visible in Dallas/Fort Worth will happen in 2017. The next total solar eclipse visible from DFW will happen on April 8, 2024.

NASA's website is a great source for solar eclipses: <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html>

Historically, solar eclipses were believed to be portending "bad events". Most common of those are earthquakes; as it was suggested that the total gravity force on Earth is increased during a total eclipse, when the Moon goes in front of the Sun. The Moon orbits around Earth in approximately one month. During every New Moon, the Moon is on the same side of the Sun, so its gravitational pull is equal to the gravitational pull experienced during a solar eclipse. If the above theory is correct, then earthquakes should be triggered every month. However, earthquakes are rarer than that. We have more than a century's worth of precise solar eclipse and earthquake data. The frequency of eclipses and earthquakes has been studied and no correlation has been found between the two! In addition, we have a better understanding of earthquakes today and Earth's interior is to blame.

The image above was taken with a camera and solar filter during the October eclipse by our Program Coordinator,

Amy Barraclough. The sunspot cluster visible in this image is 11 times the width of Earth, or the width of Jupiter. If you've got any pictures from the eclipse, we'd love to see them! Share them with us on our [Facebook Page](#) or send us an [email](#) with your favorite shots!

Astronomy Day



Our annual Astronomy Day event on Saturday, October 25 was a huge success! More than 300 people came out to the Planetarium to enjoy the day's events. Telescopes were set up to view the Jupiter-sized sunspot on the Sun. After the Sun set, the telescopes were turned to celestial objects like Mars, the Ring Nebula and a double star system, called Albireo.

Other events included presentations by local space enthusiasts with the National Space Society of North Texas and the Moon Society, discounted Planetarium shows, free handouts and a raffle.

In the picture above, you can see a Girl Scout Troop as they help out with an interactive scale of the solar system activity.

Share your pictures from Astronomy Day with us, we'd love to see them! Send them to us by [email](#) or post them on our [Facebook page](#).

Holiday Schedule



We're putting the finishing touches on our Holiday show schedule, which starts in December. Check our [website](#) in the coming weeks to plan your holiday visit to the Planetarium!