

CAN'T STOP BY A BRANCH?



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FEATURED

EDITOR'S PICK

Generations Turn Out For Library Eclipse Watch

Resident Snaps Littleton Main Street Scenes

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1 of 15



Residents and visitors spanning the generations took in the solar eclipse during a watch party Monday afternoon at the Bethleh Public Library. (Photo by Robert Blechl)

BETHLEHEM — While scores of people in New Hampshire hustled north into Coos County to be under the path of totality, some 50 residents and visitors spanning the generations turned out to a watch party at the Bethlehem Public Library to catch a glimpse of a near-total eclipse.

And for many, the glasses that they donned for protection will be recycled and used by those in another part of the world for their turn to experience the next solar eclipse.

Monday afternoon's event was hosted by Friends of Bethlehem Public Library, which provided free glasses as well as T-shirts, snacks, and a raffle with prizes that included two telescopes.



The glasses were provided to anyone requesting them.

For the partial eclipse of 2017, the library obtained 50 glasses.

“I got those at the last minute and 200 people showed up,” said Bethlehem Public Library Director Laura Clerkin. “I wanted to make sure we had enough, so we got 500 pairs of glasses.”

Shipping them to Bethlehem was the Space Science Institute.

Monday's eclipse in Bethlehem, which was called a “deep partial” with a magnitude of 99.5 percent, began at about 2:15 p.m.

Mid-eclipse hit at 3:29 p.m. and lasted about a half minute.

Shortly after 3 p.m., as it approached the sky began to dim and the temperatures dropped by about 10

degrees from what had been a warm 60.

Observers commented on the uniqueness of the darkening, cast in a light and shade many had never seen before.



Along Main Street, the streetlamps turned on.

Soon, the sun reemerged and it was full daylight again.

Leading the glasses recycling effort for 2024 is Bethlehem resident Chris McGrath.

“Bethlehem is now on the list,” he said. “We’re recycling.”

McGrath will store the glasses until he knows where they need to go.

The company he’s contacted will pay the shipping costs.

“They’re for somebody who’s having an eclipse next year,” said Clerkin. “On fine print on the back, it says they’re good for three years. We got them for free and we’re happy to pass them along to people.”

The Cog Railway is also bringing glasses to the Bethlehem library.

Kay Kerr, a board member of Friends of Bethlehem Public Library, said the group began thinking about the 2024 eclipse soon after the 2017 partial eclipse.

“This has been a long time in the planning,” said Clerkin. “We’ve been working on this for a year and a half. It’s nice that the day has finally come. We’re very fortunate. The weather is nice and the snow is melting. It’s a lovely day.”