

# 'Total Eclipse' could burn out a customer's lights

By the Associated Press  
The two Chinese astronomers who got drunk 4116 years ago and forgot to scare off the serpent swallowing the sun would get a kick out of Russ Cox's knockout cocktail, the "Total Eclipse."

They also might enjoy watching the sun go black on a champagne-sipping "Flight to Totality" high above the Columbia River gorge.

If the Chinese astronomers, named Hi and Ho, were still around, they could be at Cox's bar in Richland, Wash., on Feb. 26, when this country's final total eclipse of the century occurs.

Cox, manager of the Hanover House, invented the "Total Eclipse," a mixture of rum, gin, sloe gin and orange juice, for armchair astronomers who want to celebrate the first such eclipse visible in the United States since March 7, 1970.

Americans have more scientific explanations for an eclipse, but some of their rituals seem almost as strange. Indeed, a kind of solar mania grips humankind when the moon blocks our view of the sun, and everybody wants a front-row seat, even if means scores will permanently damage their eyesight, as 121 did in 1970, by looking directly at the sun.

Thousands are jockeying for a good position when the moon's shadow touches land first at 8:12 a.m. at Agate Beach, Ore., just west of Portland, then sweeps a path 180 miles wide up the Columbia River and across much of Oregon, Washington, northern Idaho and North Dakota into Canada. In other areas of the United States, it will be seen as only a partial eclipse, of varying degrees.

For those who want a view above the clouds, the Seattle Science Center has chartered an Alaska Airlines 727 jetliner to take observers — at \$115 to \$135 each — on a champagne flight 40,000 feet above the Columbia River gorge.

A tourist agency in Berkeley, Calif., has already sold out its "Moonshadow Expeditions," which will leave San Francisco and Los Angeles on Feb. 23 for

a resort on Hecla Island off Canada. Wendy Weaver, the tour coordinator, said 60 persons have paid \$445 to \$475.50 for the trip, but she could have sold many more tickets.

"The response has been unbelievable," she said. "We are already making plans for next year's eclipse in Africa."

But the biggest hubbub is in Goldendale, Wash., a farming community of about 3,300, which has the only public observatory in the path of the eclipse. Thousands of visitors are expected, the town's four motels have been booked up for weeks, and the mayor is allowing

campers to park on the school grounds. Not to be outdone, the mayor of Helena, Mont., is inviting everyone in the United States to her city, "the Queen of the Rockies," to witness the event which won't have a rerun until the year 2017.

Mayor Kathleen Ramey said the eclipse will have its longest duration in Helena, tossing off the figure 36 minutes and 8 seconds with a sly smile. Scientists say, however, it actually will last only 2 minutes, 36 seconds.

While Mayor Ramey says she can't promise cloudless skies, she said, "I'm guaranteeing we won't have smog."

The eclipse will be nothing new to a few Goldendale residents, who were there when it happened the last time, on June 8, 1918.

Wilma Spalding, now 85, is one of them. She remembers how she smoked some glass to look through and took a

chair out on the sidewalk with her son, Howard, who was 2 at the time.

"The chickens went to roost and, when the moon passed over the sun, the chickens came out and the rooster crowed," Spalding recalls.

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