

I drove up to Oregon with the family for the Total Solar Eclipse that occurred on Monday August 21st, 2017. We left on Saturday morning, drove to the Oregon Coast, enjoyed the weekend there, came inland for the Eclipse, and drove home. About 1800 miles driving in about 66 hours...

I had never seen a total eclipse of the Sun. Have seen annular eclipses, and had seen partial eclipses - and they are cool for the science of the astrophysics involved: Kepler's laws, etc. However, having now seen a total eclipse - it's much cooler than anything I've seen in nature and glad we made the effort to go see it. There was enough coverage of the sun to be able to see the sun's corona safely with the naked eye: and the corona looked like a large fire with wisps shooting out very far into space. The sun was almost pure white, against a black background: I had expected it to be more yellowish. During the full-eclipse, could see planets, it was that dark!



On the way up to see the Eclipse, we stopped for dinner in Medford, Oregon at Elements. It was a Spanish restaurant, and we had Tapas in honor of the Guapas. My wife had friends from college, and they had stayed together as friends since: weddings, reunions, and the like. It was Patricia's birthday on Saturday, and we sang Happy Birthday at Dessert time in her honor. Here we are after dinner at the restaurant's lounge area.



We made it to the beach house that could sleep all of us, and woke up the next morning to a beautiful scene. The kids are relaxing in the house on Sunday:



Mark and I walked the beach at low tide on Sunday morning, while the others slept in a bit after the long drive.



We rallied the troops and drove to Rockaway Beach, and attended Mass at St. Mary's by the Sea. The priest had been a Jesuit for sixty years, and had a great homily tying the path of the Eclipse to the Oregon Trail, and the Trail of Tears. Made analogies to the Book of Exodus. I personally love the depth of the Jesuit Priests - they really are very studious and very thoughtful. Enjoying donuts and coffee after Mass.



We then drove to the town center, and enjoyed Hot Dogs that were being sold by the Rotary club. Afterwards, we toured the Tillamook Cheese Factory, sampled cheese, and had Ice Cream! My favorite was the Huckleberry Ice Cream.



We went back to the beach to change out of church clothes, and enjoyed some beach time in Oceanside at the Three Arches with Mark and Ellie.



A quick bath to wash off the sand, and then we headed to Garibaldi to take a Steam Train excursion up the coast.





We wrapped up about 5:30pm with the Train, and Olivia said we should go see Washington State, as we were pretty close to the border. We decided to go see the sunset over the Columbia River, and see Mount Hood. Mount Hood is behind us here - but can't been seen well in the photo. We are at Steamboat Park near Camas, WA. After sunset, we grabbed Pizza at Mod Pizza in Portland, bought breakfast and lunch supplies (for Monday) at Safeway, filled up the gas tank, and headed back to Oceanside, OR to sleep for the night.



I woke up on Monday morning at 4:30am (intentionally, with an alarm) - and checked the weather forecast for the day, and went outside and looked at the beach fog, etc. Made the call to drive inland before the traffic, so we could see the Eclipse from Salem, Oregon - and not risk missing it with fog or clouds at the beach. Left about 5:15am after waking up the crew and packing the van, and drove with little traffic into Salem. Went to a few parks, many had full parking lots - and decided on Minto-Brown Island in Salem for watching the Eclipse. Had to street park and walk 15 minutes, but it was an OK walk to get into the park long before the Eclipse. Probably settled in at a good viewing spot about 8:00 am - long before the Eclipse start of 9:05:25 am in Salem, OR.

Kids collecting ripe blackberries while waiting for the Eclipse to start...



As the Eclipse was nearing totality, the shadows became crisp and intense - so the team jennings broke out into song! YMCA... To see the shadows, of course.



Here are my four eldest watching the partial eclipse before totality. Will, Henry, Olivia, and Mark... (left to right below)



And Ellie reading the instructions for the safety glasses:



After Totality, we wanted to get out of town as quick as we could to beat the traffic. It was like leaving a concert all at the same time... However, this time, there is only one two lane road to exit! I-5 was cramped: I was taking surface roads in and out to beat the traffic as best as I could - and still only made it 67 miles south in 4 1/2 hours! A little south of Eugene the traffic got better, and we started making great time. We had hoped to drop by to see the Heffernan's in Ft. Jones, and were able to make it just after 7pm. The Heffernans were neighbors in Los Altos, and they helped me care for Ellie and Olivia shortly after Tricia's death by having them stay with them for weeks (I don't remember much then, I hope that's about right). Here are the four Heffernan daughters and four of my kids enjoying spaghetti together at the Heffernan Ranch. Mark somehow wasn't in this candid photo! He probably was getting more pasta. It was great to see their family, they are enjoying ranch life and their kids are growing up to be very special women.



By the time we wrapped up with dinner, and got back on the road, we were able to make great time back home. We got in early on Tuesday morning - and all the kids crashed for most of Tuesday after such a long, fun-filled family weekend. If you note in some of the photos, Ellie wore much of the same clothes during the trip. She decided to pack for herself, and I didn't check it as carefully as I should have!