

Concordia plans viewing event for solar eclipse on October 14

Kent Bewley- Staff Writer

A once in a lifetime opportunity will be presenting itself soon to people throughout the Golden State, including here on campus. A solar eclipse will pass through the United States on Saturday the 14th, and people throughout California will have a chance to view it at a nearly full rate.

The eclipse will pass through the western United States in a southeast curve starting from Oregon, then descending down through Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and parts of western and southern Texas. People in those regions will be able to view the eclipse in total annularity depending on where they are located on the second Saturday of October.

Dr. Michael Hoffert, Adjunct Professor of Planetary and Stellar Astronomy, is eager to view the eclipse on Oct. 14, having experienced many eclipses during his life. Hoffert provided information about the science behind eclipses and what happens in various environmental settings when a solar eclipse occurs.

“The moon, when it’s closest to the Earth, covers up the sun precisely,” Hoffert said. “Now an annular eclipse, [the moon] will not cover [the sun] precisely. It’s going to have a very thin edge of the sun visible.”

Hoffert has planned an event here on campus on the day of the annular eclipse, which will be held in the courtyard east of Grimm Hall. The partial eclipse will begin at around 8:05 am and

the point of maximum eclipse will occur around 9:20 am. “Totality’s going to last a couple minutes... from 9:19 to 9:21[am],” said Hoffert.

An annular solar eclipse is when the moon covers all of the Sun except for the upper rim of the Sun, also known as the corona. During a total solar eclipse the moon blocks all light coming from the sun. This annular eclipse will still be impressive to view, as it will be the first one to pass through the western U.S since May 2012. A total solar eclipse occurred in the western U.S most recently on Aug. 21, 2017.

Hoffert said the best location to view this astronomical wonder is “where it’s going to be a maximum eclipse... so, you’d like to be on the pathway, closest to the pathway of totality where that shadow’s going to be on the Earth.”

Hoffert explained that nature will be reacting to the solar eclipse too, “Animals and plant life are going to react like the Sun just went down and nightfall is coming. Flowers are gonna close, birds are going to do different things, night predators are going to come out.”

Luca Conlafonieri, a Global Exchange student from Italy, has seen a solar eclipse before in his life when he was 14. Conlafonieri thinks that a solar eclipse is better than a lunar eclipse “because it’s something more particular. With the moon we can see it every day, but with the Sun it’s something you don’t see that often.”

Conlafonieri might get his chance to see this upcoming eclipse in a nature setting, as he is set to go to the CU Active Base Camp in the area of Yosemite National Park during the mid-semester Break.

The partial eclipse will end at around 10:43 a.m. in the local area, so if you want to witness something breathtaking during mid-semester break here on campus, this is a can't-miss event. If there are no clouds on the morning of the eclipse, come over to the Grimm Hall courtyard to view one of God's divine occurrences of heavenly bodies colliding in the big blue sky.