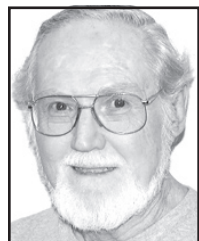


Solar eclipse coming over southern U.S.

The Sunday, May 20, new Moon will produce a solar eclipse visible over the western half of the U.S. Those in a narrow band from the Texas panhandle to northern California will see a rather rare annular eclipse while the rest of us will see an impressive sunset partial eclipse.



Paul Derrick
● Stargazer

As the Moon orbits our planet each month, new Moon is the point at which it passes between the Sun and Earth. If the plane of the Moon's orbit around Earth was exactly the same as the plane of the Earth's orbit around the Sun, we would see a total solar eclipse every new Moon (and a total lunar eclipse every full Moon). But since the two orbital planes aren't exactly the same, solar (and lunar) eclipses occur far less frequently than monthly.

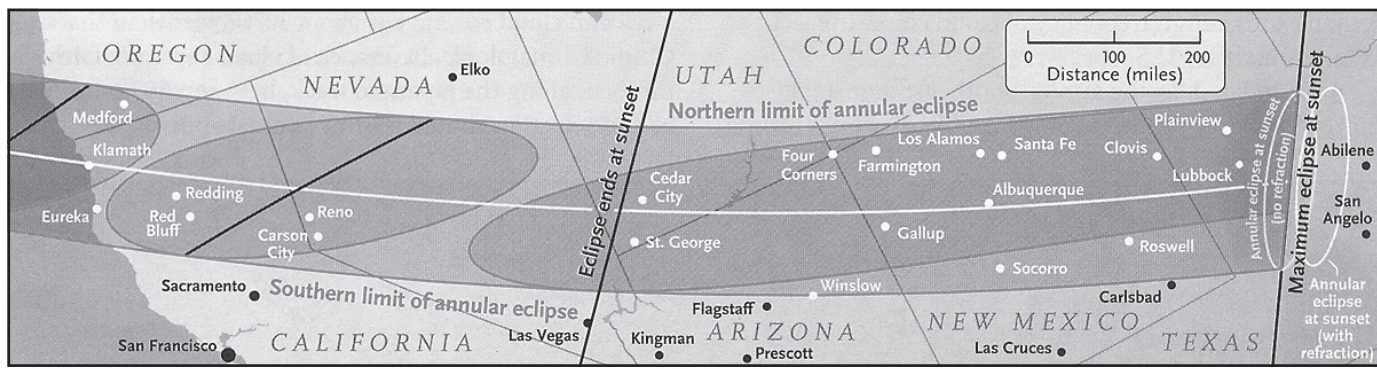
When the Moon does pass exactly between the Sun and Earth, it creates a total solar eclipse, temporarily blocking out the Sun and casting a moving shadow across part of Earth. If it passes partly, but not quite exactly, behind and blocks out part of the Sun, it creates a partial solar eclipse.

The Sun is 400 times larger than the Moon, and by coincidence, is also 400 times further away, thus they appear the

same size. However, since the orbits of the Earth and Moon are elliptical rather than circular, the distances between the Earth and Sun, and between Moon and Earth, vary making their apparent sizes also vary.

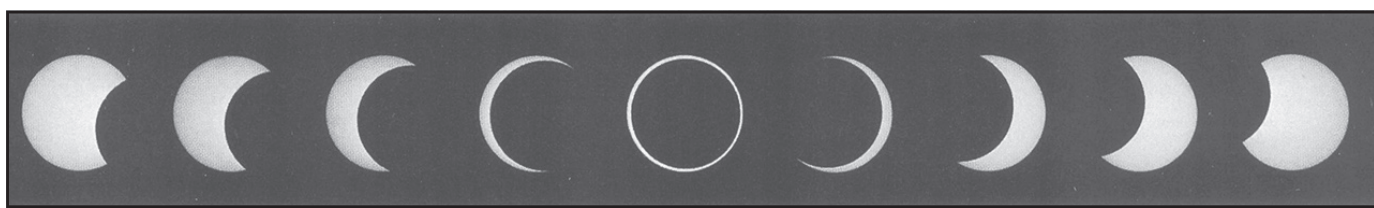
Since the Moon's orbit around Earth is more eccentric (less circular) than Earth's orbit around the Sun, the change in the Moon's apparent size is more pronounced. When solar eclipses occur with the Moon further from Earth, the Moon isn't large enough to cover the entire Sun, leaving a "ring of fire" around the Moon's silhouette. What would otherwise be a total eclipse becomes an annular eclipse.

This is what those within a narrow band less than 200 miles wide from Texas to California will see, weather permitting. At the extreme eastern end of this band in Texas, the eclipse will reach annularity as the sun is evening setting. The further



FRED ESPENAK and SKY & TELESCOPE

Area (map, above) from which the May 20 annular eclipse can be seen. Below, increasing amounts of a partial eclipse leading toward an annular eclipse, which occurs when an eclipsing moon isn't large enough to cover the entire Sun.



west from which one views, the earlier before sunset the eclipse begins and the longer it will be visible.

The rest of the western U.S. not within the area of annularity will see a partial eclipse of the Sun where the Moon covers part of the Sun. The nearer one is to the

area of annularity, the greater the percentage of the Sun will be eclipsed.

Paul Derrick is an amateur astronomer who lives in Waco, Texas. His website (www.stargazerpaul.com) contains an archive of past Stargazer columns and

other basic stargazing information. Contact him at paulderrickwaco@aol.com or (254) 723-6346 or write 918 N. 30th St., Waco, Texas, 76707.

Trucker harassment suit backfires

By Ryan J. Foley
The Associated Press

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — They were learning to become truck drivers but wound up in a nightmare. In detailed accounts to a federal agency, dozens of female employees of one of the nation's largest trucking companies told of being propositioned, groped and even assaulted by male drivers during cross-country training rides.

"I was beaten, I was fondled, I was humiliated and I was taught nothing," one trainee, Ramona Villareal, said in a deposition.

But rather than leading to a workplace discrimination judgment, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's sexual harassment lawsuit against Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based CRST Van Expedited Inc., has backfired and put the agency on trial. The agency is coping with a court ruling that could make it harder and more expensive to pursue large discrimination cases against companies in the Midwest, if not nationwide.

And dozens of women who described an ordeal of unwanted and aggressive sexual conduct may receive no compensation for lost wages or emotional distress because of judicial criticism of the agency's investigation.

A February ruling in the case sets a new standard for workplace class-action lawsuits in the federal court district that includes Iowa, Arkansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska and the Dakotas. Before filing a lawsuit on behalf of employees alleging similar discrimination, the agency will first have to investigate the merits of every worker's claim and attempt to reach settlements. If the agency doesn't, EEOC risks having the case dismissed.

The agency has argued that such a standard is impractical in cases involving hundreds or thousands

of potential victims. At a minimum, the agency says, investigations would take longer and delay relief compared to other regions, where class-action cases can be filed with a lower standard. EEOC has a deadline next week to determine whether to appeal.

"We are an agency with limited resources already, and this is something that, if it stands, would make it even more challenging for us to address and vindicate discriminatory violations in the 8th Circuit," EEOC general counsel P. David Lopez told The Associated Press.

But businesses say the ruling could stop unfair legal tactics and prevent unnecessary and expensive litigation.

"It's incredibly significant," said Chicago lawyer Gerald Maatman Jr., who represents companies sued by the agency. "It is a signal by the federal courts that the tactics the EEOC has been using over the last several years may be improper."

The ruling came as the agency has made systemic discrimination cases — those involving many employees — a larger enforcement priority. EEOC investigates 100,000 complaints of workplace discrimination annually, and recovered more than \$450 million for employees last year.

The agency's tactics have rattled the business community, which says lawsuits can cost millions of dollars and destroy reputations. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the CRST case denouncing EEOC's tactics and calling for the agency to be more cooperative with industry.

The trucking company case was prompted by a December 2005 complaint from driver Monika Starke, of Azle, Texas, who alleged she was paired with a driver who constantly made crude sexual remarks and advances. After she

escaped his truck, she said, she was paired with another driver who demanded sex in exchange for a passing grade.

After failing to reach a settlement with Starke, EEOC filed a lawsuit in 2007 on behalf of all female drivers subjected to "a sexually hostile and offensive work environment." After the company sent letters to thousands of female employees, about 150 gave depositions in which they described being alone for weeks in trucks with male drivers.

One woman said her trainer asked for oral sex every morning and told her if she slept with him she'd certainly pass. Another testified that her trainer put on pornographic movies daily and told her he wanted her to perform similar acts. "And he never let me go a day without telling me that he controlled me passing or failing," Yvonne Fortner testified.

But some of their claims were barred for a variety of legal reasons. And EEOC's tactics infuriated Judge Linda Reade, who said the agency used "a 'sue first, ask questions later' litigation strategy." She dismissed the case and ordered the agency to pay CRST an unprecedented \$4.4 million in attorney's fees, acknowledging "dozens of potentially meritorious sexual harassment claims may now never see the inside of a courtroom."

The appeals court largely sided with her in a 2-1 ruling, but threw out the fee award and reinstated two claims: Starke's and one filed by a woman who said her trainer repeatedly entered the cab wearing only his underwear. The court ruled that EEOC should have done more investigation and informal mediation before filing suit.

CRST is expected to renew its request for compensation for legal fees. The company said it took disciplinary action such as banning offenders from riding with females.

"We think it was a very favorable decision," said CRST General Counsel Eric Baker. "We certainly believe in all instances we took those matters seriously. We do believe that we will be exonerated."

But one case that reached a jury — a California woman who opted out of the EEOC process and filed her own lawsuit — resulted in a \$1.5 million verdict against the company.

Public Notice

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THOMAS COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Marriage of David M. Bixenman and Cheryl Anne Bixenman Case No. 12-PM-25

NOTICE OF SUIT

The State of Kansas to Cheryl Anne Bixenman, Respondent herein, and all other persons who are or may be concerned: You are hereby notified that a Petition for Divorce has been filed in the District Court of Thomas County, Kansas, praying that a divorce be granted to David M. Bixenman and you are hereby required to plead to the Petition on or before the 17th day of May, 2012, in the District Court of Thomas County, Kansas. If you fail to plead, judgment will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

David M. Bixenman, Petitioner
TODD R. STRAMEL, # 17654
Stramel Law Firm, P.A.
480 N. Franklin Ave., P.O. Box 46
Colby, Kansas 67701
(785) 460-3222
Attorney for Petitioner

(Published in the Colby Free Press on Friday, March 30, April 6, 13, 2012)

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that a petition has been filed with the City of Colby requesting to vacate a portion of Cadillac Drive and Lincoln Drive in Murray Subdivision II in Thomas County, Kansas. Mark Bredemeier, James Denny, Denis Wieland and Jim Deibert are requesting that three (3) tracts be vacated are:

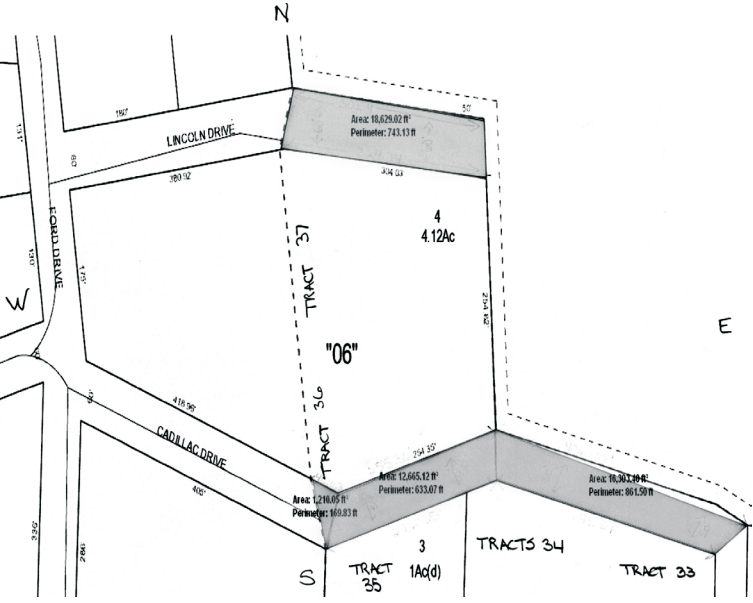
1. Vacate a portion of Lincoln Drive between the Stephens Subdivision and north of Tract 37 in the Murray Subdivision II;
2. Vacate a portion of Cadillac Drive south of Tract 36, north of Tract 35 in the Murray Subdivision II; and
3. Vacate a portion of Cadillac Drive north of Tracts 33 and 34 in the Murray Subdivision II.

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing shall be held on the 16th day of April, 2012, in the County Commissioners Room of the Thomas County Courthouse, at which time the Board of County Commissioners may approve or disapprove the petition for the vacating of said streets.

Dated this 21st, day of March, 2012.

/s/ Shelly A. Harms, Thomas County Clerk

Board of County Commissioners
Ken Christiansen, Chairman, Byron Sowers, Member, Paul M. Steele, Member



(Published in the Colby Free Press on Friday, March 30, April 6, 13, 2012)

Kaiser Angus Bull Sale

Saturday, April 14th • 1:00 p.m.
Oakley Livestock Commission Co. • Oakley, KS
Selling 54 Bulls
(24) 18 Month Old & 30 Yearlings



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2025 S. Franklin, Colby, KS 67701
(RED BUILDING EAST OF WALMART)

Assault Poker Tournament

Saturday, April 14th, 2012
Registration: 1 p.m. Start Time: 2 p.m.



Twisters Bar and Grill
735 E. College Dr., Colby KS

- Suggested donation: \$30 at the door
- Pre-register donation \$25

All proceeds go to Options Domestic and Sexual Assault

Cash Prizes

1st Place: \$350
2nd Place: \$150
3rd Place: \$75
4th Place: \$30

Other Prizes for:

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Contact Aimy to pre-register or for any questions: (785) 462-0427

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