

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### ★ NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AAVSO MEETINGS . . . . .	3
HAPPY 150TH BIRTHDAY, RASC! . . . . .	4
2017 ECLIPSE EXPERIENCES . . . . .	6

### ★ OBSERVING

HOW THE AAVSO SOLAR OBSERVERS OBSERVE THE SUN . . . . .	12
OBSERVER'S CORNER . . . . .	18
OBSERVING CAMPAIGNS UPDATE . . . . .	19

Complete table of contents on page 2

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# AAVSO Newsletter

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

STELLA KAFKA



*Starting a new year...*

The year 2018 marks three years since the beginning of my tenure at the AAVSO and, looking back, I appreciate how much progress we made together during this short time period. The AAVSO is an exceptional organization, the only organization that from its infancy aimed at building a Citizen Astronomy community, a community of individuals who acquire data for scientific research. As such, the AAVSO is an evolving organization, and during those three years it evolved even more.

Since 2015, I have had the chance to closely meet with many of you, members of the AAVSO's international community, and discuss science projects and aspirations, talk about the place of the AAVSO in the current science landscape, get excited over light curve peculiarities and stars that misbehave. But most importantly—I listened. At the AAVSO HQ, we all listened. It became our mission to listen. Listen to what you cherish from the AAVSO, what you need to improve your observations, what tools you use to spy on stars, what projects interest you. We listened to our community.

And based on what you said, we improved old tools and we built new ones. We gave you a new light curve generator, we updated VSP and VSD, we provided means for you to build your observing program through a new target tool, we created new training material that would make it possible for you to observe exoplanets and the Sun, we translated our manuals in more languages, disseminating their content to more individuals around the world. We built tight relationships with sister associations, we joined international collaborations, and we ensured that the professional scientific community is continuously aware of your great work and contributions and continues to engage our observers in scientific projects. We highlighted accomplishments and we insisted on acknowledgements. We continued celebrating our observers' great work and milestones, and encouraged those who are hesitant, to get started.

The new year finds us planning the AAVSO's future, ensuring that its infrastructure is sustainable. At HQ, we are working behind the scenes updating our development and live servers, improving our web page infrastructure, documenting our software, and ensuring that programs you use for your work run smoothly and are bug-free. With the help of our volunteers, we are attacking

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SINCE 1911...

*The AAVSO is an international non-profit organization of variable star observers whose mission is: to observe and analyze variable stars; to collect and archive observations for worldwide access; and to forge strong collaborations and mentoring between amateurs and professionals that promote both scientific research and education on variable sources.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KRISTINE LARSEN



*A First Magnitude  
Meeting of the Minds*

With the start of the new year, I want to begin my President's Column by thanking each and every one of you for your hard work for Variable Star Astronomy over the past year. Whether you are a visual or CCD observer, prefer short period or long period objects, or count the Sun, Mira, or SS Cyg as your favorite variable star, we could not have added so many high quality data points to our databases in 2017 without you, our loyal observers. But many of you made just as significant contributions to the organization without looking through an eyepiece or reducing photometric data. Whether through contributing monetary donations or time toward the development of software, mentoring a new observer or giving a talk on the AAVSO to your local astronomy club, every bit of the time, effort, and resources you have given to the organization over the past 12 months is greatly appreciated.

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## 2017 ECLIPSE EXPERIENCES

In the October 2017 *AAVSO Newsletter* we invited readers to share their experience of the August 2017 solar eclipse (total or partial) in a brief article with up to two photos that would be published in the January 2018 issue. Elizabeth Waagen (WEO) and Sara Beck (BSJ) started things off in the [October issue](#) with a description of the “Becksonian Expedition” to Wyoming, which culminated with ten AAVSOers and 8 family members witnessing the total eclipse under a perfect sky.

Here we share other experiences of the event sent by other AAVSO members/observers/friends.

Enjoy!



*What I like to do with children is to use the pinhole effect, very safe, this is the diffraction of the sun light through some holes in tree leaves.*

### MICHEL DECONINCK (DMIB), ARTIGNOSC SUR VERDON, FRANCE

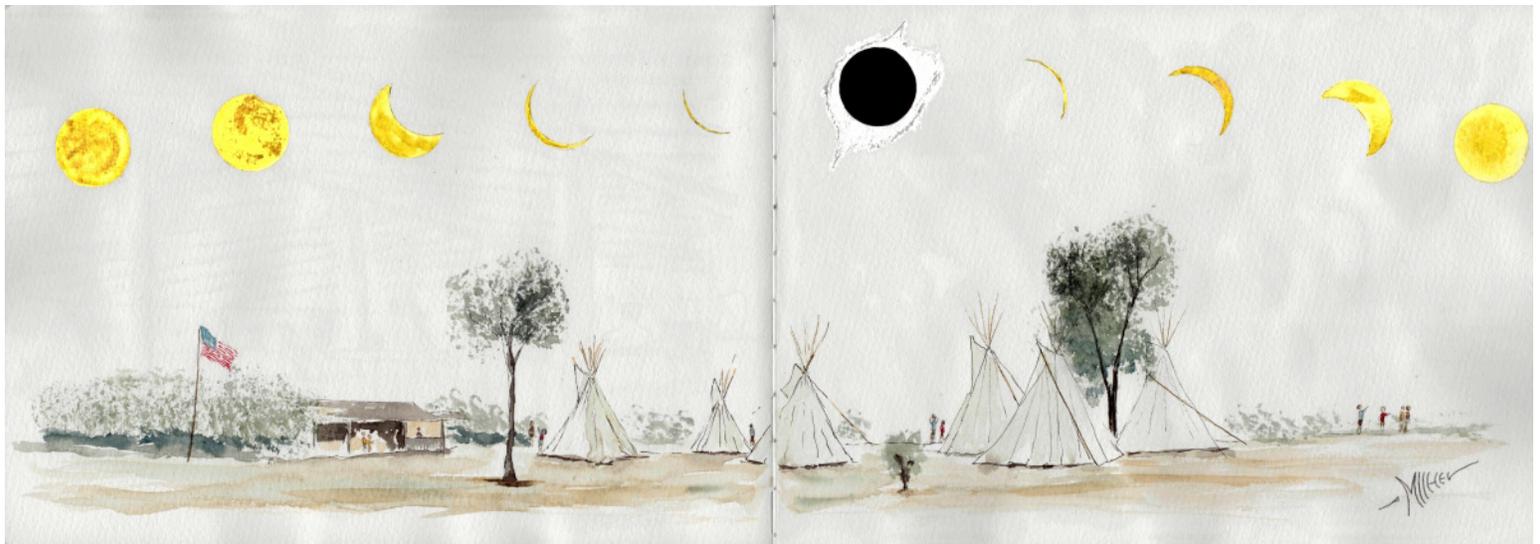
With Jannik my wife and two of our grandchildren we had a long journey to get there from Provence, look at the trip: 8 airplanes, one bus, 2 rented cars, plus of course, a lot of walks.

For the eclipse the place chosen was marvelous, a special camping was set-up close to Riverton in Wyoming. The place is in an Indian reservation along the nice Wind River. What a warm welcome we had there!

For comparison with the other eclipse we saw—1999 in France—this one was visible with a less dark sky, so less stars were visible, but [there was] a more brilliant corona and much better weather. Looking at the horizon it was like the sun was rising all around on 360°.

Full story here:

<https://www.cloudynights.com/topic/589822-2017-eclipse-impressions/?hl=%2Bsolar#entry8075514>



*This watercolor was done during and just after the eclipse.*

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