

Celestial Spectacular

photo feature
by Russ Sampson

At precisely 9:27 (MST) during the morning of February 26 the small village of Belt, Montana was briefly cast into the shadow of the moon. Although to our ancient ancestors this may have been considered an omen, today a total eclipse of the sun is viewed as one of nature's spectacles.

Just a few miles away a group of photographers recorded the event on film. At that particular location the cloud cover was reckoned at 95%, but fortunately the 5% of the clear sky spent most of its time between them and the sun.

The first photograph is a composite of six individual exposures. Starting from the right, this sequence shows the progression of the eclipse over a total span of 80 minutes.

The second photo is a greatly enlarged image of the 'Diamond Ring' effect, showing the last sliver of the sun's disk. The faint glow which is seen surrounding the disk is the sun's corona.

For those who are interested, the next total solar eclipse takes place in the Antarctic on August 22, 1979. But for the more warm blooded; catch the one in Central Africa on February 16, 1980.

