

I was totally eclipsed for the second time in my life on April 8, 2024. I saw my first total eclipse in Grand Island, Nebraska in August, 2017, and my wife and I decided right then, that in 7 years we would go see it again. We knew it would run from Texas to Maine. About a year and a half ago, we started looking at who would have the best odds of clear skies, which is always a crap shoot. We first thought we'd go to Texas but the statistics that my brother in law Richard detailed for us showed that for early April, Dallas had a 60% chance of clear skies and Indianapolis had a 55% chance. Indy was a much closer drive so we determined that would be the place.

I personally wanted to get back to this area anyway. I was there for the Indy 500 in 2006 and quickly became friends with the family that built and owned a golf course in Darlington, Indiana, which is 40 miles west of Indianapolis.

Let me give you some background. In 2006, I was a member of the ag media covering that year's Indianapolis 500. It was the first year of the Indy racing circuit using ethanol in the cars. The Rahal-Letterman racing team sent me an invitation to cover the event. Yes, I know what you're asking and yes it was THAT Rahal, longtime driver Bobby Rahal. The other guy, Letterman, had a TV show I guess.

The day before the race, I played golf at the Rocky Ridge golf course in Darlington. One of the owners, Garry Hole, became a fast friend. After the round of golf, I was enjoying a cold beverage when Garry came over and struck up a conversation. Well soon after, he suggested we go road farming around the area. Road farming is a Midwest colloquialism to describe how many view agriculture. We drive down the road looking through the windshield to determine how good the crops will be this year. It's very entertaining to say the least but very inaccurate to say the most.

So Garry, his friend JK, and I got in the old pickup and drove down many of the local roads. We stopped and talked to a few neighbors to see how things were going. Then we headed to an old covered bridge, one of the last remaining in Montgomery County. Well, we got the pickup stuck in the ditch turning around as the bridge is closed to vehicles.

So JK, being the smallest of us three, got behind the steering wheel and spun the wheels while Garry and I pushed the truck from behind. We were successful and were once again road farming.

After a nighttime run through the golf course in the dark on the fastest golf carts I'd ever seen, we had a midnight barbeque at Garry's house. Garry and I were talking like we had been friends since grade school. But when his wife Peggy, asked how long we'd know each other, I had to literally look at my watch to determine just how long it had been. I left the next day for Indianapolis for the race. I headed back home afterwards hoping to get back to Darlington someday to do more road farming with Garry. It was not to be though as just a few months later, Garry was diagnosed with cancer and he died in February of 2007. But the day before the eclipse, I did get back to play the golf course once more. There's a beautiful bench overlooking the 15<sup>th</sup> hole in Garry's honor. JK is a maintenance man at the course although he was not around the day I was there.

I did get to meet Garry's older brother Gerald, who is a retired member of the Indiana State Police. Those two and another brother, Bob, built the course that was their grandfather's farm. It was a very rocky farm and they have lots of big boulders around the course including at the entrance. To honor Garry many years ago, I called my business and website RoadFarming LLC.

As to my recollection of the golf carts we rode at night being very fast, one of the guys told me JK still has a cart that can go 25 to 28mph.

Oh yes, I did stick around the next day for the eclipse. It turned out Indy did have better viewing weather than Dallas and we had a beautiful day to see it. Right before the eclipse started it was 76°. At totality, it dropped 9°. For me, it was a twice in a lifetime experience. It was awe inspiring, to say the least.

The next total eclipse visible in the 48 contiguous United States is August 22, 2044 but only in parts of Montana and the Dakotas. My plans include a trip to Minot for that one but I will be checking the weather first though. Northwest Alaska has one on March 30, 2033 but I'll pass on that one as it's too far to drive. As for people in Dallas, they will have to wait until 2317 for their next total eclipse. I'll put that down as a maybe!



Here are the two pictures of the Darlington, Indiana covered bridge I took in April, 2024. The bridge was built in 1868 and is 166 feet long.



This is the boulder that is located at the entrance to the golf course. Pictured below show how they incorporate the rocks as tee markers. Garry told me back in 2006 that people would ask him how they got all those rocks moved into place. He said that they were already there, they worked around a lot of them. The golf course used to be the farm of his father and his grandfather before him.



This memorial bench overlooks the 15th hole tee box



Below is the 18th green with the clubhouse in the background





Emery and Mary Pat wearing the shirts that depict the second time they have viewed a total eclipse. We were fortunate to use the backyard of the rented AirBNB right in Indianapolis. We did not have to deal with any traffic issues before or immediately after the eclipse.



This picture I took with my phone during totality. The skies all around looked like a sunset whether you were looking west, north, south or east.



This is an example of the sky looking north during totality. It looks like a normal sunset in the west, only it was north. And it was like that in any direction. And the temperature had dropped 9° from 76 to 67 during this time.



This was Richard Linton's camera. He took a few hundred pictures during the entire eclipse. If you look at the camera, that was just after the sun started reappearing after totality. He had to keep changing light settings during the entire eclipse. And he would have to keep adjusting the camera as the sun and moon and earth kept moving.



The obligatory selfie during the eclipse

