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**Date:** Wednesday, 27 November 2024 9:07 AM CST

**Subject:** Re: AW: AW: Spica Occultation

Hi everyone-

I am still stunned by the sequence of events that happened this morning. I scouted out some locations near Florence, Texas last night based upon the maps that Eberhard had sent to me. I made my choice for my preferred spot. Most of the weather models were predicting clouds off to the southeast but mostly clear for the area I was in. A few were predicting clouds that far to the west. I could not go much further to the west because I wanted to be in Houston this morning to visit family.

I found a campground and got a few hours of sleep with an alarm set for 3:30. I woke up at about 3:20 and looked at my window to see mostly cloudy skies. At the campground, there were lights and trees, so I decided to drive to a more open area to assess the cloud cover situation. I also looked at the satellite loop. I parked on the side of the road close to my chosen observation spot. I arrived there a little after 4. The sky was clear overhead and to the southwest but mostly cloudy up to about 45° to the east. I debated going a bit to the west to see if I could get the clouds in the east to be lower in the sky, but decided against that because I was worried I would not make it far enough west in time. In the meantime, it clouded up overhead as well. A few minutes later, it was clear overhead and to the southwest, but still thick clouds to the east. It was now past 4:30. I was giving up hope. Then suddenly, I noticed a bright area behind the clouds where the moon should be, and a few moments later, part of the crescent briefly became visible. I quickly started my car and drove a mile or so to my chosen spot. As I arrived, the crescent moon became visible, but I could not see Spica. I quickly set up my telescope as clouds intermittently passed across the moon. As I focused my telescope, I could see Spica very close to the moon.

The edge of a small cloud passed over the moon and Spica as I waited for the first disappearance. It was windy, so the telescope was shaking a bit.

Then I saw Spica disappear behind the dark edge of the moon, and it reappeared a few moments later. I couldn't believe it. I was actually going to see it! I got 3 more disappearance/reappearance pairs for a total of 8 events!

The time between the last thick cloud moving out of the way to the beginning of the event sequence had to be less than 90 seconds!

Eberhard, your wish for luck with the weather was certainly needed! Your maps were quite helpful as well.

Spica was beautiful hovering close to the crescent moon and it was amazing to see it disappear and reappear multiple times.

Unfortunately, I didn't get a video recording of it because there was not enough time to set up that camera. I didn't get an audio recording of it, because I didn't want to miss the first disappearance while fumbling with my phone. It stings that I don't have any recording of the event. But the memory is there!

Still on a high over the miraculous clearing.

These are the coordinates of the observing location:

30° 50' 5.94" N 97° 51' 10.52" W

I was using an 8 inch Dobson telescope at 28x

Thank you to all of you for your assistance.

Ken, I'm sorry you were fogged out- I saw your report on the IOTA discussion groups page.

Mark

On Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at 02:22:12 PM CST, Eberhard Riedel <[e\\_riedel@msn.com](mailto:e_riedel@msn.com)> wrote:

Mark,

here is the situation close to Florence with again up to 10 contacts. The KML-filse opens Google Earth and show all lines at a 50 m spacing or just those with 8 or 10 contacts. You don't have to be in the yellow range but can be anywhere along the blue extensions labeled with the desired number of contacts.

Good luck with the weather!

Eberhard